



**BNEI AKIVA**  
OF THE UNITED STATES & CANADA

**SNIF**  
**CHOVERET**  
**TWO**  
**5782**

BNEI AKIVA DURING SHIVAT TZION




## BACKGROUND

Every year we plan on dedicating one of the chovrot to talk about the tnu'a in the lens of the yearly theme. As we discuss the return of Am Yisrael to their nation, we will be focusing this month on the ideology of Bnei Akiva as in impetus of the movements involvement in Aliya to and settlement of the land of Israel. Here are a few important points about Bnei Akiva during this time:

- Bnei Akiva was established in 1929 as a religious-zionist youth movement, filling a void for religious youth who wanted to join the zionist movement
- Bnei Akiva helped establish and run camps in Europe to gather potential immigrants together, teach them Hebrew and other skills, and help arrange for aliya
- Bnei Akiva youth built up religious kibbutzim, and participated in settlement missions such as Choma Umigdal
- Bnei Akiva youth also resisted the British occupation and fought for settlement rights

In the next few pages we will be discussing key aspects of Bnei Akiva's ideology through the period of Shivat Tzion, and discuss how we can apply these ideals to the needs of the Jewish people, Land of Israel, and our Torah today.



# PEULA #1

## TOPIC

Bnei Akiva Ideology - What do you believe in?

## GOAL

The Goal of this peula is to discuss what the chanichim see most important to them, which values guide their decisions, and to discuss the ideals and values of Bnei Akiva

## BACKGROUND

In the Atlit internment camp, set up by the British, many Jewish maapilim - immigrants without permits - were kept in holding until they got permits to enter Mandate Palestine or were deported. They left behind all sorts of messages - their names, where they came from, and in some cases, the movements they were involved in, including Bnei Akiva. In one of the cabins, some detainees carved the Semel (BA logo), as a way of indicating what brought them there.

## SUGGESTED PEULA

### Supplies:

Very small dixie cups

A bag of tortilla chips (or pretzels)

The small dixie cups represent their suitcase, and the Tortilla chips represent the values that are most important to them. Have them choose an amount of chips that they think they could fit into the cup and have them put them in (or try). This is meant to be what things they would take with them if they had to leave and go elsewhere; what are the things that they wouldn't leave without. Go around and ask what each chip represents (or one-two per person). You can ask them either what physical item they would bring with them or a value that they would never let go of.

This can be combined with an active game (for really active groups) where they have to run around or race but keep all the chips in their cup, or done in a similar way with sports teams or chesed organizations that they identify with, and then discuss why they identify with them - meaning what values do they share with that organization that causes them to identify with them.

## CONCLUSION

A lot of people came to Eretz Yisrael with a suitcase of items - some practical and some value based (for example clothing was practical, a Gemara or family picture is value-based). Specifically there were people that came driven by the ideals of Bnei Akiva, and that's what they carried with them. What are the things we identify with the most? If you (or the chanichim) were to leave a mark on the wall representing who you are, what would you carve?

# PEULA #2

## TOPIC

Torat Eretz Yisrael - Longing for the return of Torah

## GOAL

The goal of this peula is to discover the ambitions, not only of settling the land physically, but also rebuilding the world of Torah in Eretz Yisrael - Torat Eretz Yisrael

## BACKGROUND

The Torah has been our lifeline for generations upon generations. Despite being kicked around from exile to exile, we have held onto it, and it has kept us alive. However, the Midrash tells us explicitly that there is a difference between the Torah of exile and the Torah of Eretz Yisrael: [Shira - Please format quote nicely]

וַיִּזְהַב הָאָרֶץ הַהוּא טוֹב, מִלֵּמַד שְׂאִין תּוֹרָה כְּתוּרַת אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאִין חֻכְמָה כְּחֻכְמַת אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל (Vayikra Raba)

“There is no Torah like the Torah of Eretz Yisrael, and there is no wisdom like the wisdom of Eretz Yisrael.”

Part of Bnei Akiva’s vision in their push for returning to Eretz Yisrael was not only to physically return and work the land, returning the wasteland to being a lush garden, but rather building a world of Torah that is based on Am Yisrael living in Eretz Yisrael.

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY

### I’ll do you one better

#### Supplies:

Notecards

On a set of notecards write a whole bunch of random things - either activities or objects. The way this activity works is that everyone around the circle will need to add something to that word in order to make it better, and say before he/she adds the addition, “I’ll do you one better...” and repeat everything said beforehand. For example: If the word on the card is ice cream, then the first person in turn will say, “I’ll do you one better - ice cream in a cone.” Then the next might say I’ll do you one better - ice cream in a cone with sprinkles”; I’ll...ice cream...sprinkles, at the beach...on a hot day...with friends...etc. You can keep going until everyone in the circle has a turn, someone messes up, or until nobody can think of anything anymore.

You can use the spinner or dice to create a way to determine who goes first. The person who goes first will obviously have an easier time thinking of something.

Have one of the words be Torah (maybe the last), and see what the chanichim come up with to make Torah better in our lives.

## CONCLUSION

The objective of the previous activity is to try to think how we can bring things to a higher level, whether it might be ice cream, guitars, or Torah. The ambition of Bnei Akiva is to bring Torah to the highest level that we can, not only in our lives, but also in Eretz Yisrael, as that is where the highest level of Torah can be achieved. How can we make Torah study better, even if it’s just a little bit in our lives? Or in our Snif?



# PEULA #3

## TOPIC

Eretz Yisrael - Closest to Hashem

## GOAL

To discuss the importance of Eretz Yisrael to our national mission and goal, and why we strive to return there

## BACKGROUND

There have been in the past several attempts to establish an autonomous Jewish territory, but ultimately the idea of establishing one in Eretz Yisrael is the one that succeeded. When Herzl observed the Dreyfus Trial, he was convinced that the Jewish people need to be self-governing, and that as long as our fate is in someone else's hands, we are doomed to be discriminated against and persecuted. But the concept of self autonomy is not enough. Bnei Akiva believes that a true Jewish autonomy can only exist in Eretz Yisrael, and it is only there where we can fulfill our responsibilities and potential as the nation of Hashem.

ארץ אשר ה' אלקיך דורש אותה, תמיד עיני ה' אלקיך בה... דברים י' א' ב'

"Land which Hashem, your G-d, seeks, the eyes of Hashem, your G-d, are always upon it." The mefarshim teach us that while Hashem administered angels over all the other lands, Hashem himself presides directly over Eretz Yisrael.

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY

### Cornhole toss

#### Supplies:

Bucket/basket/cornhole board

balls/beanbags/anything else throwable

Bnei Akiva number pages

Bnei Akiva spinners

Set up a basket or bucket (or cornhole board if you happen to have one) and 5 Bnei Akiva number pages leading up to it, each number spaced approximately 3 feet apart, and the closest one 4 feet from the bucket. The objective would be to toss their balls/whatever into the bucket, however, they will first need to determine where they stand.

Using the spinner, have each chanich spin the spinner. The colors will correspond to Jewish autonomous colonies that have tried to be created in the past. Assign a color to each of the following:

- Oblast Russian Jewish Autonomy
- Medinat Yisrael
- Jewish Colony in Clarion, Utah
- Jewish Kingdom in Yemen
- Jewish State in Uganda

Medinat Yisrael will obviously be the closest to the bucket, and as for the rest, the order doesn't really matter as much.

The main message here is that in theory you can reach Hashem from anywhere, but in Eretz Yisrael, it is closer and more accessible. In Eretz Yisrael is where we can build the strongest bond and connect to Hashem

## CONCLUSION

The Zionist movement in general, and Bnei Akiva specifically, strived for returning and re-establishing Jewish self-autonomy in Eretz Yisrael specifically. This is the land that Hashem had given to us in order to practice our nationhood. This land is where the Jewish people are destined to be. It would be analogous to a plant planted in the wrong soil. It will grow but not maximize its full potential. What are some of the things in USA/Canada that might prevent us from reaching our full potential as a nation?



# PEULA #4

## TOPIC

Am Yisrael - Kibbutz Galuyot

## GOAL

To discuss and appreciate the uniqueness of each aliya community and their contribution to the fabric of our Jewish society.

## BACKGROUND

As we all experienced in our peula from the last packet, the mixture of olim from different countries and territories may have caused a bit of turmoil, confusion, challenges, and at best amusement. But what more could we ask for? As Hashem granted us the opportunity to return to our homeland, it is up to us to not only figure it out, but rather appreciate the contribution of each oleh, whether coming from Romania, Germany, Tunisia, Yemen, Iraq, or America (and many others).

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY

### Pringles Stacks

#### Supplies:

Different pringles flavors or different snacks

This peula is definitely based on the Pringles superbowl commercial from 2021. Have each chanich bring a different can of pringles, or different snacks. Give each one the opportunity to think of a combination of different flavors that everyone needs to try. You can make it into a competition for whoever thinks of the best flavor combo and think of a point system for taste, number of different flavors combined, etc.

This can easily be adapted to a healthier option by using fruits as opposed to snacks.

## CONCLUSION

Each population within Am Yisrael has a special flavor, and something new and unique to offer the rest of the Jewish people. We all have what to learn from others, and what to teach as well, not only on the ethnic or congregational level, but also on the personal level. The unique differences might not always go together nicely, but at least we should be as eager to try as we were with the pringles.

Bnei Akiva has throughout the generations worked hard to include everyone and to make sure that certain populations felt and were included. Bnei Akiva has set up snifim for new olim, for children with special needs and even in hospital children's wards. What can you do to include and appreciate the other members of your snif? What can you teach to everyone? And what can you bring to Israel, that is Israel is lacking because you're not there?