



Educator's Guide

Rescuing the Wandering Jew

This episode discusses the “ingathering of exiles” or “kibbutz galuyot.” Israel has brought Jews from around the world to their homeland since its inception. One of Ben-Gurion’s great visions, a state that welcomes any and all Jews, the Israeli government paid more than lip service about these ideals and absorbed immigrants from across the world. From Operation Magic Carpet for Yemenite Jews in the 1950’s, to Operations Moses and Solomon for Ethiopian Jews in the 80’s and 90’s, Israel has rescued hundreds of thousands of Jews facing persecution. In this video and educator’s guide, students will reflect upon Israel’s relationship with World Jewry. What does it mean to be a Jew in the eyes of the Israeli State? How far will Israel go to take responsibility for Jews worldwide? Ultimately, what is a home?

Link to video: <https://unpacked.education/video/homeland/>

Further Reading

1. <https://knesset.gov.il/laws/special/eng/return.htm>
2. <https://medialab.jerusalemu.org/yemenite-children-affair/>
3. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DJIQIQsMeUA>
4. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/outcry-as-barkan-winery-shuns-ethiopian-workers-over-doubts-of-their-jewishness/>
5. Ari Shavit, *My Promised Land*, Chapter 6



Review - Did the students understand the material?

1. What are the names of the operations discussed in this episode?
2. What is the name of the group of Jews from North Africa and the Middle East?
3. Where did most Jews come from in Operation Magic Carpet?
 - a. USSR
 - b. Ethiopia
 - c. Iraq
 - d. Yemen (correct answer)
4. Which Jewish holidays did the Ethiopian community not celebrate?
 - a. Hanukkah and Purim (correct answer)
 - b. Sigd
 - c. Passover and Sukkot
 - d. Shavuot and Rosh Hashana

Discussion Questions

1. Chaim Weizmann said the following:

“Our whole prayer is that this gathering of exiles will increase and embrace an ever-larger multitude of our people, who will strike roots here and work side by side with us in building the state and making our unproductive places fruitful again.”

Considering the remarkable diversity of Jewish refugees coming to Israel from over 70 countries, do you think Israel has been successful in uniting people from vastly different communities and cultures?

2. In some ways, the stories of all these different operations are a source of tremendous Jewish and Israeli pride. What about these stories is so heroic and full of pride?



3. The historian Nathan Weinstock declared:

"I found out that the story we had been told—that the Jews left the Arab countries because they were Zionists—was, for the most part, wrong. True, they had an affinity for the Land of Israel—that is certainly correct. But the organized Zionist movement was very weak in the Arab countries. The great mass of Jews left under duress. They were expelled. They were subjected to such enormous pressure that they had no choice but to leave."

When we speak about the "right of return," we often forget that many Jews in Arab and Muslim countries were in fact expelled from their lands and oppressed. In what ways can we discuss this tragedy more in our classrooms?

Reflection Questions

1. As Robert Frost said, "Home is the place where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in." We see this acutely with how Israel engaged in daring missions to bring in Jews from around the world. In what ways do you view Israel as your home? Or do you feel distant to the idea of Israel as a home?
2. Israel is a country that was founded by European (Ashkenazi) Jewish leaders, but now, Ashkenazim represent fewer than 50% of Israeli Jews. Israel is also a country with an unparalleled diversity of Jews from vastly different cultures, communities and socio-economic statuses. If you could give advice to the leaders of Israel, what would you suggest as a way to unify these different peoples without stripping each community of its unique flavor and contribution?