

# Gathering in the Exiles – Itzik's Story



In the first three years after the State of Israel was declared, over half a million Jews came home. This effectively doubled the population of the brand-new struggling State.

**Prime Minister Levi Eshkol** attempted to help settle this flood of immigrants by building “Maabarot” throughout the country. These Transit camps which operated as work camps put the refugees to work in archeology projects or in agriculture. Many people, mostly Jewish refugees from Arab countries lived in these huts and tents with dirt floors for years until permanent housing and work could be found for them. **The photo above is** from 1950 of the Maabarot in Yavne’el which functioned as an agricultural camp.

*“And he shall set up a banner for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.”*

–Isaiah (11:12)



I hope Itzik will let me help him with the English on his next business card :)

**This week**, while in Tiberias I noticed the Naot Shoe Store was having a sale because there were so many tourists in town.

**Naot are a world famous** Israel brand of sandals and shoes made in the Upper Galilee. When I mentioned to the owner that I wasn't a tourist, but a neighbor from nearby Yavne'el, his eyes lit up!

"I lived in the Maabarot in Yavne'el when we first arrived in Israel," said Itzik.

I smiled and mentioned I happen to have picture of the Maabarot from Yavne'el and showed it to him on my phone.

Itzik teared up as he was flooded by childhood memories and immediately called his elderly aunt to share with her that he now had a rare photo of the Maabarot from Yavne'el. They were Jewish refugees from Tunisia who fled when the Arab world declared war on the newly born Jewish State in 1948. None of the family had a photo!

That's when I asked Itzik if he'd share some memories with you on the following video... enjoy!