

# Israel @ 70

Achievements and Challenges

Through the Eyes of Contemporary Israeli Literature

Zot Hashira - Study Kit

1978 - 1988

The Forth Decade

Students Source Sheets

1978 - 1988

## The Forth Decade

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## Introduction to Unit Four

The fourth decade of the state of Israel, as all those preceding and the ones following, was complicated. I say it about the years between 1978 -1988, mainly to reflect the deliberations and long process of choosing the themes and literature that went into this unit.

In this unit “The Settlements” are looked upon from two opposing points of view – thus you will find them in “Achievements” as well as in the “Challenges” sections. The evacuation of Yamit will be presented in the “Achievements” section, not because it was a joyful event but rather because of the fact that it was achieved as a necessary part of the peace agreement with Egypt. It was executed, in spite of the pain and opposition, in a relatively peaceful way.

The war in Lebanon is our second Challenge with a focused look at the “Sabra and Shatila” tragedy and its multiple impacts on Israeli society.

The materials of the unit are many, therefore teachers will need to exercise their own judgment in defining those that work best for any given community.

Start your preparation, by looking the PowerPoint presentation called 1978-1988 The Unit at a Glance – for a general overview.

### **Achievement I**

#### ○ Settlements

Introducing the settlements as an achievement, reflects the views of a large part of the Israeli population then and today.

Immediately following the end of the Six Days War, the movement for greater Israel was formed. It was led by prominent public figures such as Uri Zvi Grinberg, Nathan Alterman, Tzvia Lubatkin and many more who did not represent only the right wing conservative thinkers. The love of Eretz Yisrael the joy of returning to biblical lands was overwhelming and called for settling them immediately. Israeli governments, were reluctant during the first decade, (1967-1977) yet even then settlements were already authorised and supported.

Hebron (1968) was the first, to be followed by Gush Etzion (1969) and Elon Moreh at Sebastia in 1975.

Labour governments supported these efforts, albeit, reluctantly, many times. The big change occurs when the Likud wins the 1977 elections. Menachem Begin becomes the Prime Minister and Ariel Sharon becomes the minister of

housing. It is during his years in this role, that the settlement movement triples its power.

As you consider your teaching choices, checkout the PowerPoint presentation: “1978—1988 Achievements” for useful links and graphic information.

There is a lot of documentary, historical analytical literature about the settlements. It is oftentimes reflective of ideological standpoints. Having said that it may be advisable to review some of the facts, here are two of the many options.

[Wikipedia article about the Settlements](#) or video clip hyperlink on slide 2.

Our choice of texts offers two different types of literature. Songs of longing and love of the land reclaimed, and two prose pieces coming from the heart of the settlements.

### **Teaching Mashiach Pains חבלי משיח**

#### **Mashiach Pains**

When I walk  
Without a where-from, without a where-to  
I wear on my heart, like an amulet  
Always  
This little tune, a little song.

Mashiach pains here they come  
Mashiach pains here they come  
Mashiach pains, here comes the day  
The day has arrived.

There are those who sing  
Across the silence  
Their lips may not move,  
But their voice  
Is loud and clear

There are times I take  
A blow upon a blow  
When things turn bad and bitter  
Is just when  
Sing to myself, just sing to my self  
If I reach the house  
By the cypresses  
Someone will offer me water  
And when my strength seeps away  
I shall still sing, I shall still sing.

The expression חבלי משיח connected to the expression חבלי לידה birth labor pains, relates to the suffering the people of Israel is supposed to go through, just before the day Mashiach comes.

In her song, at the top of the 1978 hit parade, for several weeks, Naomi Shemer, articulates the mood of the country and more specifically, that of the settlers' movement and their supporters.

The beginnings of the settlements was hard, often times against government decisions, endless negotiations to let just a few stay in an army base, or rent a hotel in Hebron for just a Passover Seder.

The song depicts a long journey with no clear aim, yet.

It recognizes repeated blows and hardships, whispered prayers and an eternal undying hope and even confidence that Messianic times are nearby.

See link to a Naomi Shemer rendition of the song on slide 3

חבלי משיח - נעמי שמר

כאשר אני הולך  
בלי אין ובלי אין  
על ליבי כמו קמע  
יש לי כל הזמן  
שיר קטן, שיר קטן .

חבלי משיח הנה זה בא  
חבלי משיח הנה זה בא  
חבלי משיח הנה זה בא היום  
הנה זה בא היום

יש כאלה ששרים  
מעבר לדממה  
שפתיים אולי אינן נעות  
אבל קולם  
ישמע, ישמע .

חבלי משיח הנה זה בא ...

לפעמים אני סופג  
מכה אחר מכה  
וכשרע לי וכשמר לי  
אז אני דווקא  
שר לי כך, שר לי כך .

חבלי משיח הנה זה בא ...

אם אגיע אל הבית  
אצל הברושים  
מישהו יגיש לי מים  
וככלות כוחי  
עוד אשיר, עוד אשיר .

חבלי משיח הנה זה בא...

## Teaching “To the Waterholes”

This song, written by Naomi Shemer in 1982 for a documentary film made by Moti Kirshenbaum, about Israeli attitudes to the settlements' movement, which at the time, were already popular and controversial.

A few elements are worthwhile noting here.

Remind students of the earlier Naomi Shemer song “Jerusalem of Gold” from 1967, where in the first verse she had expressed pain at the dry waterholes of Jerusalem. **אֵיכָה יֵשׁוּ בִּזְרוֹת הַמַּיִם.** Later when she added the last verse she rejoices in the victory by stating **חֲזַרְנוּ אֶל בִּזְרוֹת הַמַּיִם** we have returned to the waterholes.

Some fifteen years later, at the height of the wave of building new settlements in Judea and Samaria, Shemer expresses her joy by describing a journey of love to the waterholes. Waterholes are many in the Judean hills, the Negev and other mountain areas of Israel. In our collective language of imagery, they are therefore connected to the uncorrupted biblical land. Not that of the coastal plain (Tel Aviv) but to the mountain land of our Judges, Kings and Prophets.

Go to slide 4, for some images and a link to Naomi Shemer’s own rendition of the song. There are many others available on YouTube.

## To the Waterholes

Naomi Shemer

It is out of love<sup>1</sup>  
I went to the waterholes  
By desert<sup>2</sup> routes  
Through an unsawn land  
It is out of love  
I forgot town and home<sup>3</sup>  
In your footsteps  
With savage yearning<sup>4</sup>.

To the waterholes, to the waterholes  
To the spring palpitating<sup>5</sup> in the mountain  
It is there, my love will still find

---

<sup>1</sup> The notion of emotional and physical attraction to land of Israel is the motivating power

<sup>2</sup> The juxtaposing of water and desert creates a literal image of quenching a great thirst

<sup>3</sup> The state of “Green Line” Israel is presented as already comfortable and built – thus the new land is the real calling

<sup>4</sup> A possible suggestion of an uncontrollable passion -

<sup>5</sup> Like heart beat – Like when you are in love!

Fountain waters<sup>6</sup>

Depth waters<sup>7</sup>

River waters

Only my love

Gave me shade<sup>8</sup> in the summer

And during the terrible sand storm

Only my love

Built me a town and a home<sup>9</sup>

It is my life

It is my death<sup>10</sup> every hour

To the waterholes...

The fig tree is there

And so are the olive saplings

Also the magical blooming of pomegranates<sup>11</sup>

There is my love

Drunk not by wine

Slowly closing its eyes<sup>12</sup>

Conclude the teaching of “To the Waterholes” with listening to the song. Cantors may be involved in learning / teaching it to congregants. We are allowed to enjoy this beautiful song of longing to the authentic Eretz Yisrael even if we do not agree with the settlements politics. ☺

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<sup>6</sup> Pure

<sup>7</sup> Penetrating – the multiple levels of the water to be found in the quest for the waterholes lead to an inevitable

<sup>8</sup> Shade imagery as a symbol for divine protection appears in Israeli literature from our most ancient sources in the book of Jonah to modern Amichai poetry.

<sup>9</sup> The repetition of the same element as connected to the new endeavor suggests the hope that the young settlements of the time will become the cities of the future.

<sup>10</sup> Acknowledgment of possible sacrifice

<sup>11</sup> The biblical species are also the images of the Song of Songs – combining erotic imagery with the love of God

<sup>12</sup> Closing one's eyes in the presence of others is often a gesture of trust and calmness.

אל בורות המים  
נעמי שמר

מאהבתי  
הלכתי אל בורות המים  
בדרכי מדבר  
בארץ לא זרועה  
מאהבתי  
שכחתי עיר ובית  
ובעקבותיך -  
בנהיה פרועה -

אל בורות המים, אל בורות המים  
אל המעיין אשר פועם בהר  
שם אהבתי תמצא עדין  
מי מבוע  
מי תהום  
ומי נהר

רק אהבתי  
נתנה לי צל בקיץ  
ובסערת החול הנוראה  
רק אהבתי  
בנתה לי עיר ובית  
היא חיי, והיא  
מותי מדי שעה

אל בורות המים ...

שם התאנה  
ושם שתילי הזית  
ופריחת הרימונים המופלאה  
שם אהבתי  
השיכורה ולא מיין  
את עיניה תעצום לאט לאט

אל בורות המים...



## **Teaching “We Who Push for the End of Times”**

The author Haggai Segal, served as editor of Nekuda, the monthly journal of the Council of Jewish Communities in Y”esha, (Judea, Samaria and Gazah) and as Israel Channel 7 News department director. He is the Editor in Chief of the paper Makor Rishon and presents a weekly political program at the Knesset TV channel. Segal has published many books in Hebrew, including Achim Yekarim (English edition, Dear Brothers: The West Bank Jewish Underground), about the Israeli Jewish underground of the 1980s of which he was a member. For his part in attacks on Palestinian leaders he was found guilty and had served time in prison.

In his book “Five Minutes from Kfar Saba” he presents a satirical self-criticising image of the settlers.

Go to slide 5 to show a picture of the author and the cover page of the book. Point out the clearly “typical” settler attire of jeans, tzitzit , holding a sign hitchhikers in Israel often carry to show their destination. The title which is the text on the sign, references a sales pitch for homes in the settlement at the time, suggesting how close they all where to central Israel.

It is hard to see, on the map, the very fine line of the former border separating “Green line Israel” from the settlements. Click once to show distances to a few settlements – all within less than 40 minutes driving.

The title of the chapter we are reading: “We who push for the End of Days” – אֲנַחְנוּ דּוֹחֵפֵי הַקֵּץ refers to those who attempt to bring Geula – Messianic days, faster. There are those who will define this act as a total prohibition, while others, within the orthodox world, will claim that it is a mitzvah to help in preparing for the ultimate Geula.

When the author is calling his friends and himself by this name, he is placing their actions of settlement, within the debate of Messianic times. Albeit with tong in cheek.

Note as you read, the clear collaboration of government officials with the publically not always recognized settlers' movements

## **We who push for the End of Days<sup>13</sup> Hagai Segal**

*At the dawn of summer 5635 I was commanded to get ready with my equipment and emotionally prepare the wife*

<sup>14</sup>

Had it not been for that phone ringing, it is very probable that we would have stayed in Netanya for ever... getting old slowly and peacefully in the heart of the twilight zone between the green line<sup>15</sup> and the line of the horizon. With no guard duties, no taxes to "Amana"<sup>16</sup> and no American intelligence satellite above our heads 24 hours a day. In the city of diamonds<sup>17</sup> we had fresh rolls at dawn, a separate beach in front of our house and neighbours who were fun to have deadly political debates with, unlike here, where the stormiest political debate is about the chances for the renewal of the National Religious party as opposed to the chances of its leader, Zevulun Hamer, getting old.

But at the start of summer 5634 at 10:00 pm, Netanya time, a guy called Frishtig<sup>18</sup> called and ordered me to get ready and to prepare my wife emotionally, because we were meeting the following morning at 6:30 am at a junction leading to Samaria.

"Excuse me" I snickered, "Who did you say is speaking?" "Frishtig", "we meet half a year ago at a parlour meeting in the home of the Oroti family. You donated Chai (18) IL to Gush Emunim<sup>19</sup>, so we registered you for a settlement group".

"Yes, but we never meant to go to a settlement ourselves, for sure not with a six hour warning. Knowing us, it will take us two to three years to get organised"

"You had two thousand years to get organised" I was lightly reprimanded by the "pusher for the end of days", on the other side of the line, "An opportunity was created now to settle in Samaria, and if we miss it for all sort of excuses and Pichifkes (Yiddish for trivial things) it may end up being a lamentation for ever"

For obvious reasons, I did not want to personally bear the responsibility for the destruction of the Third Temple, therefore I started retracting: "You could have given me at least a week to make proper arrangements at work. We do not even have packing boxes"

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<sup>13</sup> Pushing the End – לדחוק את הקץ refers to people who are not waiting for Mashiah but rather acting towards messianic days -

<sup>14</sup> The language imitates military wording of call up for reserve duty- the mentioning of the need to prepare the wife puts this sentence on a different level of domestic discourse – who is more ready for the great act of settling the land?

<sup>15</sup> Israel's pre June 1967 border

<sup>16</sup> A settlement movement

<sup>17</sup> Natanya – was the centre of diamond polishing industry

<sup>18</sup> Not only is this a typically Ashkenazi name, it also means breakfast in Yiddish

<sup>19</sup> The movement for greater Israel, supporting settlement in all its parts

“We are counting on you to find a way, see you in the morning”.

I talked myself into believing that they must have a good reason to rush and I woke up Raziella.

“Can we not ask them for a postponement?” she asked with a broken voice while squeezing pot plants into an overflowing box, “ Even the early Tower and Stockade<sup>20</sup> settlements had two months to prepare....”

Her **spoiled behaviour**<sup>21</sup> lead me to an educational counter attack:

“How can you compare Hanita (One of the Tower and Stockade Kibbutzim) to us? They only had to face small Britain, while we are facing today, mighty super power Israel. You might have missed the fact the Palma”ch<sup>22</sup> is not on our side either, these days. And do you happen to know where my Talit is?”

“Exactly where you have left it this morning”

The following day, at the same time, we were already old timer residents of the day old settlement located on the King’s Road from Qalqilya<sup>23</sup> to Daharia<sup>24</sup> – a collection of a dozen dilapidated mobile homes, legacy of a bankrupt circus.

A high school student from the Committee for the Settler, brought us a coffee pitcher and some pretzels. We had used the reprieve to breathe regularly for the first time of the day. “I still cannot comprehend why they pressured us?” Raziella said, reopening our wounds, “Could they have not told us a week earlier? It is inconceivable that it was a surprise for them as well. An operation as delicate and complex, needs at least a month preparation”

“You are quiet right”, I mellowed, “It seems that this is the only way the committee can ascertain the seriousness of our intentions, toughen us for what is yet to come. A sort of a screening test for an elite unit. Those who cannot live with the timing, better stay in the **coastal plain**<sup>25</sup>.”

“With all other Geula (Salvation) refuseniks, the generation of **knitted kipot** will never crawl with the exasperating slowness of **their beret**<sup>26</sup> wearing fathers”

With time, I learned, I was talking nonsense, Frishtig gave us the six hours order, a mere fifteen minutes after he got it himself.

The decision to settle the place was taken a mere dozen of hours before zero hour. During a regular meeting of the Gush secretariat. Reb Moishe had asked what was going on with the “Mountain Heart” group, Hannan announced that as far as he was concerned they could get started at sunrise and Benny had said it was fine. What if his wife was about to have a baby any

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<sup>20</sup> A Jewish settlement project under the British Mandate – building Kibbutzim overnight

<sup>21</sup> Note the irony of complaining about the wife’s behavior while he himself wanted just the same postponement

<sup>22</sup> Jewish underground combat unit of the anti-British Haganah underground

<sup>23</sup> Arab town within green line Israel

<sup>24</sup> Palestinian refugee camp across the green line

<sup>25</sup> The coastal plain – Tel Aviv – always less committed, less Jewish etc...

<sup>26</sup> This remark refers to an inter-generational conflict within the Zionist- Orthodox world, the young generation is considered way more fighting and pioneering than their parents, who even hid their kiput under beret hats.

minute, and he had no idea where to find mobile homes. Reb Moishe expressed his satisfaction saying: “Well done, you should be blessed” and ordered a taxi for a private meeting with the Minister of Defence. At the same time his secretary was trying to coordinate the meeting. “The minister’s office please...Shalom, I am speaking from the office of Rabbi Moishe...could the honourable minister meet him in half an hour? This is terribly urgent”.

A few months of living across the green line, taught me that early coordinating and preplanning of an orderly timetable are totally opposed to the world view of my new neighbours. The modus operandi of Gush Emunim, and most probably, the secret of its success, are based on making world shaking decisions in real time and not even a minute earlier. **The Gush believes with all its might, in the vital importance of some homeland parts to our security but totally negates the importance of some planning for our safety.**<sup>27</sup> Our friend Oroti, for example, started preparing his son for his Bar Mitzva ceremonies a few days before zero hour. He also insisted on the reading of the whole Parsha (Matot Masaey) and the learning by heart of a drasha as long as a holiday edition of the “Nekuda” newspaper. The happy father had full thirteen summers to get ready for the event, but he did not want to go against the settlement’s Minhag.

“We have decided, this morning, to build a new neighbourhood on hill 668”, the secretary of the settlement is calling to tell the Deputy Minister of Housing”

“Wonderful decision” sighs the Deputy Minister, you have six months to present your plans so we can include them in our next five-year plan”

“I will be with you in ten minutes” says the secretary politely, “construction is starting next week”

The official is ready to explode: “Why do you always wait for the last moment?”

**“This is not the last moment, construction is not starting before next week”<sup>28</sup>.**

It is true the Deputy Minister hung up the phone angrily, but a week later, heavy machines were roaring on the hill. A red eyed land contractor (Frishtig, remembered to call him at 3:00 am) is yelling at two surveyors to stop hanging around, but honestly, it is none of their fault; they were hired by the secretariat at six am provided they hand in their findings by six pm.

“Let us, for once work properly and start looking for gardeners already” I am trying to persuade Frishtig as they are laying the foundations.

“Stop talking nonsense” he chuckles “בעיתה אחישנה”<sup>29</sup> (all in good time).

There was a time I was committed to fight these cruel last minute orders. But this commitment had no chance against the tidal waves of the Geula (salvation) dynamics that was flowing in the veins of the settlement.

Our community expels, in no time, miserable people who are addicted to meetings, calendars and pre-set agendas. The element of surprise grants a thrilling taste to our communal life. You can never tell what awaits you in the next five minutes. While you are getting ready to retire

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<sup>27</sup> Security ביטחון is national and thus more important than safety בטחיות which is personal and thus almost like pampering in an idealistic society.

<sup>28</sup> Very obvious mockery of the improvisations and shortcuts in Israeli planning.

<sup>29</sup> An expression used for the time of the arrival of Mashiach

peacefully to bed, at the end of yet another work day, Rav Nehemia may surprise you with marching orders.

In the best case scenario the mission is only to compose an urgent message in English, in preparation for an upcoming meeting with a well-known donor from Reykjavik. Worst case scenario, you are begged to leave immediately to the airport to bring back a family of new immigrants from Bukhara, who are supposedly landing tonight, according to a telegram they have sent us two and a half weeks ago.

Honestly, the most successful demonstrations in the history of the Yesh"ra<sup>30</sup> council, were planned from today to today. There is an urban legend that says, that in the Egged Bus Company they always have a supervisor and a secretary on duty, in case the officers of the Gush will call at dawn, and will demand 300 buses for a sudden demonstration at the Malchey Israel<sup>31</sup> square in Tel Aviv.

Night editors of the evening papers regularly call Frishtig to verify that the Gush is not planning a demonstration for the following day, so they do not need to keep front pages for huge ads. Yet it had already happened that Frishtig had promised them there was no demonstration at the horizon, and less than an hour later he adamantly demanded the whole of page two for a large surprise march leaving at dawn from Jenin to Ramallah. The editors said it was too late, Frishtig threatened to get a restraining order and they finally compromised on page 3.

Sometimes when this offensive and cute phenomenon drives me crazy, I am planning a terrible revenge. At the dead of one morning, I will call, Frishtig, Oroti and Rav Nehemia, one after the other, and I will tell them with choking voice that Mashiah had arrived two hours ago to Beth El, he had left this very moment to come to our settlement. "So why are you telling us only now?", they will panic, "my white shirt is in the laundry!"

Oh, you miserable people with no faith, I will torture them calmly– you had almost six thousand years to get ready.

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<sup>30</sup> Judea, Samaria and Gaza

<sup>31</sup> Kings of Israel Square now known as Rabin Square

## Teaching "Is There a Chance for Love" – David Ben Yossef

David Ben Yosef was born in the ultra-Orthodox neighborhood of Jerusalem Meah Shearim in 1933. His life was bitter; orphaned childhood and many health trials. He fought in the 1967 Six Day War and was miraculously saved in battle. He was part of the early settlement in Hebron in 1983. Non-conformist in his views about education, healing, spirituality. His book **"Is There a Chance for Love"** was and is still read by many as a spiritual guide. From the heart of orthodoxy, settlement and commitment to the land of Israel, comes this call for humanistic treatment of the Palestinians, critic of Israeli soldiers behavior when such critic is deserved, and a true hope and belief in the possibility of peace.

Start your teaching by looking at slide 7 – ask your students to try and formulate the opinions of David Ben Yosef, about the settlements and of the Palestinians in Judea and Samaria based on his picture and the cover page of his book?

Read the following excerpt and renew the discussion based on Ben Yosef's views as expressed in the text.

Use this text to conclude your study of the Settlements as an achievement, of the fourth decade of the state of Israel, by evaluating new information and revisiting previous notions (stereotypes?).

### **Is There a Chance for Love** – David Ben Yossef

In the circle of hatred, a horrible magical circle, the one you cannot see the end of – a self-sustaining devil's dance.

Young men are brutally attacking, soldiers attack brutally, and young men are brutally attacking. Time and again

Day after day, year after year.

I am asking myself "Where have Rabbi Kook's dream gone?"

I am descending from my observation post and getting closer to the soldiers and the badly beaten up boy.

I can see an ugly hole in his chin, an ugly stream of blood is gushing out flowing all over his chest. Tears in his eyes, his face contorted.

He turns to me in English: "Please tell them to stop!

Please! I am bleeding, I will never do it again! I promise you!

I am turning to the soldiers, I am asking them: "Enough already, enough!"

They are attacking me, yelling: "who are you, a priest? You are forgetting that this is a war? Don't you understand that behind these stones, hand grenades will follow?"

I am trying to insist; "They need to be arrested, we need to put them on trial. We are the landlords in Eretz Yisrael. We have the responsibility and the obligation to maintain order discipline and security. We do not lack physical strength. This is how lucky we are. But he who is truly strong, he who feels in possession, does not need to enforce power all the time.

If we shall not find within us the spiritual strength to impose order and discipline within our home, while protecting the dignity of the rioters who are at our merci, we shall turn our own home into hell with our own hands".

One of the soldiers said: “You could be a great speaker but not a soldier, all who are afraid should remain at home. I would send you in there into the refugee camp to deliver a lecture about morality, you will find yourself under a heap of stones before you were done.

I know he was not right. This soldier. It was only yesterday that I had visited there, inside the refugee camp and nobody covered me with a heap of stones.

We went there to arrest a terrorist who was responsible for a lot of spilled Jewish blood.

We stopped the car at the center of the camp. The commander, accompanied by two men went to look for the terrorist. I stayed with another soldier.

A large crowd started gathering around us. Looking at us with those familiar hateful looks. It was clear to me that it is not I who they fear, just my costume – military uniform, a steel helmet and a machine gun I tried to get closer to those boys and they retreated fearfully. I said: “La tachef” (do not be afraid) but the terrible fear was so clear in their eyes. I felt like a scary monster.

I turned to one of the men and asked if I could get a glass of water.

I could see the fear evaporate from the man’s face. A friendly expression took its place.

A monster asking for a glass of water is not so scary.

“T’fadal” he had suggested with a polite gesture, inviting me to come into his home. The soldier standing next to me, reprimanded me: “Ben Yosef, did you lose your mind, he will cut your throat”

I said “Shukran” to the man and stayed standing where I was, afraid. A monster facing a monster.

The man called his daughter who was standing nearby, she went into the house and came back with a glass of water in her trembling hand.

Afraid.

When I finished drinking I said to the Arab man: “The world is sick, very sick!”

He looked at me with a blank face – not understanding.

- I pointed at the children and said:” They do not deserve to suffer from wars” – I said.

He did not understand a single word but got the tone the facial expression.

I took, out of my pocket the small book by Rav Kook<sup>32</sup> with the photo of my granddaughter inside, and showed it to the Arab man: “ She does not deserve to suffer from wars” \_ I said’

The Arab took the “Orot”, he looked at the infant, who looked back at him with her big peaceful eyes. He was much moved.

His daughter, standing by him also peeked at the photograph and got very excited. She too was moved by what she saw. Her eyes were jumping from the picture to me and back to the picture, unbelieving.

Suddenly she tore the little book out of her father’s hand and started running to the crowd surrounding us. I saw her going from one to the other, showing each one the picture and pointing at me. I saw the blank faces of the crowd starting to thaw, a shadows of smiles getting more numerous, larger.

I saw the girl coming back to me, joyful and happy. She handed me the book and said:”Shukran”.

---

<sup>32</sup> Rav Kook - Abraham Isaac Kook 1865 – 1935 was the first Ashkenazi chief rabbi of British Mandatory Palestine, the founder of Yeshiva Mercaz HaRav His book Orot (lights) deals with the tremendous ideological challenge of seeing redemption coming after 2000 years of exile by secular Jews. Why would David Ben Yosef carry this very book with his granddaughter’s picture in it, do you think?



## **Achievement II**

### **The Evacuation of Yamit**

#### **Introduction**

Yamit was an Israeli settlement in the northern part of the Sinai Peninsula with a population of about 2,500 people. Yamit was established during Israel's occupation of the peninsula from the end of the 1967 Six-Day War until that part of the Sinai was handed over to Egypt in April 1982, as part of the terms of the 1979 Egypt–Israel Peace Treaty. Prior to the return of the land to Egypt, all the homes were evacuated and bulldozed.

The evacuation of Yamit, was painful and extremely stressful to most Israelis. Many objected and demonstrated against it. Yet alongside the pain, and contrary to serious concerns, it ended peacefully. Thus it may be justified to present it as an achievement.

Three poems/songs are included in this section. Each addressing the evacuation of Yamit from a different point of view. All three lament the evacuation yet the messages differ.

All three reference biblical and prayer texts. It is interesting to note that poets/lyric writers who belong to different ideological sides of the Israeli spectrum, are all comfortable with biblical references and so are their readers.

Start you teaching with slide 8. Point out the location of Yamit, just south of the Gaza strip, thus in Egyptian territory.

Yamit was the dream of an Israeli Riviera. Its construction entailed the evacuation of hundreds of Bedouin families. The original plan was a city of 200.000 inhabitants with a deep water port. None of this ever came into being as the 1979 peace agreement with Egypt, included the return of all these parts to Egyptian hands.

Before you turn to the texts, show the video clip about the last moments of the evacuation, to better understand the fears and the pain of that time. (slide 8)

#### **Teaching City of Numbered Days - Yonadav Kaplon**

Yonadav Kaplon is an Israeli poet. He was born in Melbourne Australia in 1963. He started writing at a young age and was influenced by Zelda who was from Hassidic background yet wrote and created modern poetry. Kaplon is considered as one of the leaders in the revival of religious modern poetry in Israel.

The title of his poem עיר ימים ספורים City of Numbered days is a juxtaposition to the title of a famous Israeli novel about Jerusalem עיר ימים רבים City of Many Days by Shulamit Hareven. Thus creating the contrast between the eternity of Jerusalem and the passing, very few days of Yamit.



Review the annotated text – see more teaching suggestions at the end.

## City of Numbered Days - Yonadav Kaplon

From the songs of Yamit

1.

Not a laudable beauty  
Drunk not of wine  
Sand kisses its border Sun at her service

Take off your shoes

The sand is

Holy<sup>33</sup>

2.

Light is light darkness is dark  
Bitter sound of sea always  
The sound of the sea makes ancient words  
Twirl like temple incense on the beach  
Kingdom of priests, with no Hoshen (breastplate) nor Ephod, but  
Tzitz (golden head plate)<sup>34</sup>

Blooms on its forehead as a modest note  
Of a new song.

3.

(Silent epigrams are moving  
Like a grunting incitement  
From phase A to phase B to phase C)<sup>35</sup>  
Onset of endings; the sea is withdrawing.

4.

Pull out a large and violent boiler  
Seal the hall. The hands  
Are Jacob's whether  
Upright and acting or laying down  
Like a rock of flint<sup>36</sup>

5.

In the morning  
You walk in phase A  
Here is where a dream is buried. Satan  
Tore up all the way from window Mezuzah, burning

<sup>33</sup> Referencing Moses and the burning bush

<sup>34</sup> Equating Yamit to the Temple

<sup>35</sup> The plain administrative language of the neighbourhoods of Yamit juxtaposes the biblical references

<sup>36</sup> A violent image of pulling a home apart – a clear accusation of all involved whether actively or just by acceptance.

עיר ימים ספורים – יונדב קפלון

משירי ימית

1.

לא יפה להלל,

שכורה ולא מיין

חול ישק גבולה שמש שמש

של נעלך מעל רגלך

כי החול

קדש

2.

האור אור החשך חשך

קול ים מריר תדיר

קול הים יחולל מילים עתיקות

להתמר על חופו כקטורת מקדשים

עיר ממלכת כהנים ללא

חשן ואפוד אבל

ציץ

פרח על מצחה כתו ענו

של שיר חדש.

3.

(מכתמים דמומים עוברים)

כחרחור

משלב א' לשלב ב' לשלב ג')

ראשית קצין: רחק הים.

4.

יקוב מוצא בוילר אלים וגדול

כדי סתימת טרקלין. הידים

ידי יעקב בין

בקום עשה ובין בשכב

כחלמיש צור

5.

בבקר הלכת בשלב א':

פה נטמן חלום, קרע

שטן ממזות חלון, מכה

עד לשד חדרי יחוד, עלטה

לעיני – כתמרות חיים

חרוכים

ראו עיני פוסטר האובדים

נעוץ בשער השמים

To the sap of intimate chambers<sup>37</sup>, Darkness  
In front of my eyes – like bellowing

Scorched life  
My eyes saw the poster of the lost ones  
Pinned on the gate of heaven A kettle, a bench a table  
Bleeding, taking a crushing support  
To your shame<sup>38</sup>

There was because there was  
An argument whether one should take  
You took.

6.  
A fortification is a connecting of the heart  
To hands that are suddenly an old talent  
To pour anger where  
It is needed  
A fortification is a merciless spiky  
Barbed wire  
In the soul of the fortifier, the one fortified  
Is the secret of a prayer for a miracle.  
The miracle is a story for after tomorrow.

7.  
And a fortification is impregnation<sup>39</sup>

8.  
The desert had closed over the fortified/  
As terrible as hell, whispering around  
Deposited sand – like the dead  
A snake whose rings are doubts  
Chases away from the desert along  
The whole street of the xs,  
Like angered current  
Along one's spinal cord.

9.  
What is to be done for the city  
So the sea<sup>40</sup> calms down already. The purple  
Blushes every evening and the crescent moon  
Gets whiter and none of know  
Which one is a sign and which one  
is the anger of the watery sky.

<sup>37</sup> When homes are destroyed, intimacy is touched as well

<sup>38</sup> The ordinary items of a destroyed life acquire a more elevated quality they can reach heaven, they can cast blame.

<sup>39</sup> The whole image of fortifications that were built as part of possessing the land just a few years ago are now turning totally futile with the evacuation and destruction.

<sup>40</sup> Note the words, desert, city, sea. As the city is going to disappear back into the desert and the sea.

קומקום. דרגש, שלחן  
זב דם, לחרפתך משען  
רצוץ לקחת:

היה כי היה  
וכוח אם לקחת  
לקחת.

6  
בצור הוא חבור הלב  
לידים שהן פתאום כשרון  
נושן לשפוך חמת-גדר במקום  
שצריך  
בצור הוא תיל הדוקר ללא  
רחמים  
בנשמת המבצר, המתבצר  
הוא סוד התפילה לנס. הנס  
הוא ספור לאחר מחר.

7.  
ובצור הוא עבור.

8.  
סגר על הבצורים המדבר.  
איום כשאול לואט סביב  
חול מרבץ כמת  
נחש שטבעותיו ספקות  
מבריה מן המדבר לארך  
כל רחוב האקסים, כזרם  
זועם בחוט שדרה.

9.  
מה נעשה עוד בעיר  
וישתוק הים מעלינו. הארגמן  
מאדים מידי ערב והסהר  
כמלבין והולך ואין מאתנו יודע  
מה אות ומה  
חמת שמים של-ים.

10.  
ענני בעיר ענני  
ענני כתם השיר והשעה  
ענני  
מה יהיה בשיר אשר  
זרח אתמול להיות  
מושר נצח.  
ומי יתן דמו לדיו?

10.

Answer me in the city answer me  
Answer me at the end of the poem (song) and the hour  
Answer me  
What will be of the song the shone yesterday to be?  
Sung for ever  
In who will turn his blood into ink?

11.

How is this city among cities, my love,  
Dressed as a helmet, and what are you doing  
Here brother  
Closing a mote over her,  
Hand coughing my hand, let the desert judge  
Let the heavens  
Pour  
Their fury.<sup>41</sup>

12.

To hell! My heavens  
Withholding your grace. Light  
Melted with anger.

They are beautiful. My greatest  
Angels of destruction<sup>42</sup>. And their helmets  
Shining with dew and they are singing, because  
There is a fortified  
Canopy  
On the roofs

Shvat 5743 January 1983

From the heart of orthodoxy, Kaplon combines the ancient form of poetic lamentation with the concrete reality of Yamit the city to be destroyed. While assigning holiness to this short lived desert city, he is able to combine a loving respect to the ones who are coming to destroy it in a few days.

As for your learners – would they be consoled/pleased to know that the original Bedouin tribe came back to their place and they are actually thriving there?

11.

מה עיר מן ערים, אהובי  
המחפש כקסדה, ומה לך  
פה אח  
כי סגרת עליה דיק כי  
נתת אזק בכפי, ישפט  
המדבר. ישפתו  
רקיעים  
זעמם.

12.

לכל הרוחות! שחקי  
גונזים חסדם. האור  
נתך בחמתו

ויפים הם. אלופי  
מלאכי החבלה. וקסדותיהם  
בורקות מטל והם שרים כי  
חופה  
בצורה  
על גגות

שבט תשמ"ג

<sup>41</sup> This is probably the most revealing verse of the poem – as the one in helmet, namely the soldier coming to evacuate the city, is addresses as: “LOVE” – the poet recognizes the connection and love with those who seem like the enemy, yet are members of the same loving bond.

<sup>42</sup> Here is well we see the same feeling- recognition of the closeness between destroyers and destroyed.

## Teaching Al Kol Eleh – About All These by Naomi Shemer

Naomi Shemer (1930 -2004) one of Israel's most famous song writers. She is known best for her composition of Jerusalem of Gold. Born in Kinneret, she is the daughter of pioneering Israel, her songs and lyrics are devoted to her love of the land of Israel, its nature and beauty. Ideologically she is seen as part of the movement for greater Israel. All for settling Judea Samaria and even beyond. The song was composed in 1980, when the conditions of the peace agreement with Egypt were known. The song is a prayer for safe guarding that which we already have- from the personal, to the national.

The main idea is expressed in the chorus which is a plea against a clear statement in the book of Ecclesiastics that states that there are times when uprooting is needed;

לְכָל זְמַן וְעֵת לְכָל-חֶפֶץ תַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם :

עֵת לִלְדֹת וְעֵת לָמוּת עֵת לְטַעַת וְעֵת לְעָקוֹר נְטוּעַ: קוהלת: ג' 1-2

*Everything has an appointed season, and there is a time for every matter under the heaven.*

*A time to give birth and a time to die; a time to plant and a time to uproot that which is planted.  
Ecclesiastic 3;1-2*

The song became soon associated with the objection to the uprooting of Yamit, so much so, that many see the final line as expressing Naom Shemer's concern that the song will be censured because it opposes the explicit government policy. (It was not)

It may be interesting to listen to a most recent and beautiful rendition of the song by a choir of thousands of people- as part of Israel's 70<sup>th</sup> celebrations. The issue of evacuation of settlements had not disappeared from the political discourse and the song is still popular.

Go to slide 9 for a link to the song.

### About All Theses – Naomi Shemer

Honey and sting  
The bitter and the sweet  
Our baby girl,  
Good Lord please watch over them.

The burning fire  
The pure water  
And the man coming home  
From afar

Chorus:  
For all of these for all of these  
Watch over them dear God  
Bless the sting and bless the honey  
Bless the bitter and the sweet.

**Do not uproot that which was planted**

Do not forget hope  
Turn me back so I can return  
To the good land.

Keep this home  
The garden, the wall,  
From sudden fear and sadness  
And of war.

Guard the little that I have  
Light and toddlers  
Un-ripened fruit  
And the harvested ones too.

A tree whistles in the wind  
A distant star is falling,  
My heart desires, are now registered,  
In the dark.

Please watch over all these  
And over the ones I love  
Over silence and weeping  
**And over this song too.**

**על כל אלה נעמי שמר**

על הדבש ועל העוקץ ,  
על המר והמתוק ,  
על בתנו התינוקת  
שמור אלי הטוב .

על האש המבוערת ,  
על המים הזכים ,  
על האיש השב הביתה  
מן המרחקים .

על כל אלה, על כל אלה ,  
שמור נא לי אלי הטוב .  
על הדבש ועל העוקץ ,  
על המר והמתוק .

אל נא תעקור נטוע ,  
אל תשכח את התקווה  
השיבני ואשובה  
אל הארץ הטובה .

שמור אלי על זה הבית ,  
על הגן, על החומה ,  
מיגון, מפחד פתע  
וממלחמה .

שמור על המעט שיש לי ,  
על האור ועל הטף  
על הפרי שלא הבשיל עוד  
ושנאסף .

מרשרש אילן ברוח ,  
מרחוק נושר כוכב ,  
משאלות ליבי בחושך  
נרשמות עכשיו .

אנא, שמור לי על כל אלה  
ועל אהובי נפשי ,  
על השקט, על הבכי

## **Teaching “Farewell to Sinai” Haim Hefer**

Haim Hefer (1925-2012) a well-known lyrics writer of the earlier years of Israel. His most famous songs are from the pre-state Palamch years as well as the early decades of the state. This song, composed at the time of the evacuation of Yamit comes as a clear answer to Naomi Shemer’s song of plea against the evacuation.

He quotes, in more detail, the same verses from Ecclesiastic 3 and adds many more in the same spirit. The song talks about the need to accept compromise and if need be, even giving up land for a cause. There is a recognition of the pain involved but no refusal of the need to leave. This song too was set to music – slide 9 has the link. It never got even close to the popularity of the Naomi Shemer song.

### **Farewell to Sinai Haim Hefer**

There is time to give birth, time  
There is time to plant and time to uproot, time.  
There is time to kill and time to heal, time  
There is time to breakthrough and time to build, time  
There is time to weep and time to laugh  
Time to eulogize, time to dance, time, time

I am spreading my wings  
Over all the rocks and sands  
Over the pains of your vista  
I am disappearing like a dream  
Yet I am still staying there  
In the scorching marks of fire and smoke  
In the trumpets of glory and the drums of guilt  
Thus I take leave of you, trembling  
My estranged strange one, beautiful and lost  
My beautiful strange one, legend like.

There is time to plead (beg) and time to loose, time  
There is time to keep and time to through away, time  
There is time to tear apart and time to saw, time  
There is time to keep quiet and time to speak, time  
There is time to plant and time to uproot that which was planted, time  
There is time to love and time to hate, there is time for war and time for peace.

**In conclusion of this part of the program you may want to raise any or all of the following questions:**

- Can an evacuation, entailing the surrender of land, be seen as an achievement?
- How does the fact that all three poets/writers use biblical references, inform your understanding of Israeli society?
- Do you have any personal recollections of this time in Israel and the impact of these events on you?

### **שיר פרידה מסיני**

#### **חיים חפר**

עת ללדת ועת למות, עת  
עת לטעת ועת לעקור נטוע, עת  
עת להרוג ועת לרפוא, עת  
עת לפרוץ ועת לבנות, עת  
עת לטעת ועת לעקור נטוע, עת  
עת לבכות ועת לשחוק  
עת ספוד ועת רקוד, עת, עת ...

ואני פורש כנפיים  
מעל כל הצוקים והחולות  
וממכאובי נופיך  
הריני נעלם כמו חלום  
אבל אני נותר עדיין שם  
בצלכות האש והעשן  
בחצוצרות התהילה ובתופי אשם  
וכך אני נפרד ממך ברעדה,  
זרה ומוזרה שלי, יפה ואבודה  
יפה ומוזרה שלי, כמו אגדה.

עת לבקש ועת לאבד, עת  
עת לשמור ועת להשליך, עת  
עת לקרוע ועת לתפור, עת  
עת לחשות ועת לדבר, עת  
עת לטעת ועת לעקור נטוע, עת  
עת לאהוב ועת לשנוא עת מלחמה  
ועת שלום, עת ...

ואני פורש כנפיים...

## Challenge I

### ○ Settlements

#### **Introduction:**

The structure of this section is different from all others in this study unit.

It includes two rather long prose texts. Both were written and published in Israel during the 1980s.

Both face the complexities of life in Judea and Samaria for Jews and Arabs.

Unlike the “Achievements” part of this unit, which focused on the wonder of coming back to biblical sites and reuniting with the holy land, this part is about the people involved.

It may be advisable to assign one or both texts as preliminary readings before the class, with or without the recommended questions.

Your lesson may be a conversation of insights gleaned from the texts and discussion.

The PowerPoint presentation called 1978-1988 Challenges offers some visual information as well as necessary links.

#### **Teaching “Jews do not Have Tails” David Grossman**

Here is how Penguin publishing house is introducing David Grossman’s Yellow Wind – of which “Jews do not Have Tails” is an excerpt:

*First published in 1988, The Yellow Wind is Israeli novelist David Grossman’s impassioned account of what he observed on the West Bank in early 1987: not only the misery of the Palestinian refugees and their deep-seated hatred of the Israelis, but also the moral cost of occupation for both occupier and occupied. With the unflinching eye of the investigative journalist combined with the humane compassion of the novelist, Grossman channels the myriad human voices of the conflict, weaving them into an indelible account of one of the most intractable tragedies of modern times.*

Today it is hard to recall a time when David Grossman was a young and unknown writer. Since then he had published numerous books and acquired world fame and recognition.

Yellow Wind describes a series of visits and encounters with Palestinians in the occupied territories in 1987. As you read it and ask your students to read it, bear in



mind the time of publication, listen to voices and opinions that may be very different than yours both from the writer and the person he interviews.

A few paragraphs are marked as my suggestions for special attention. You may however, ask your participants to mark their own choices for words worthy of your special attention.

Here are a few questions to accompany the reading or to be used as discussion questions in class:

- Taher says: *“Here they want to understand what you think right away: to know whether you are against the occupation or a collaborator and traitor. Black or white. They don’t understand that there are several grades in between.”*

How do you feel about this description of the Palestinian society? Is it only true of them?

- After reviewing the dangers to the Palestinian society should the Israeli occupation end, Taher talks about what will happen to Israeli society as a result of the occupation:

*—“that if you leave our land, there will be a second Beirut among you as well, because your debate over us, about the territories, is what keeps you from the real disagreements you have among you, which you haven’t pursued for twenty years.” And if we stay here, I ask. “Even if you stay here, it will be the end of you. We are dismembering you from the inside. You are small and want to be a great empire. And as you grow, you will approach your end.*

Do you feel Israeli society is influenced by the fact that it occupies another people – What type of changes have you yourself seen or heard about?

- Taher expresses the following wish:

*“In the meantime, stay with us for a little bit longer. But change your attitude. Change your views. And start thinking about us in a totally different way.” Start thinking about us as your future neighbours. In the end we will be the people with whom you will have to live here and come to an agreement with and create ties with, and do business with, and everything, right? ....So I say: Change your attitude a little, make some effort in our direction. Even try—and I know that it is probably hard for you, right?—try, God forbid, forbid, to respect us.”*

Can you try and formulate a typical Israeli answer/s to this request?

- David Grossman says:

*I heard once or twice the sickening sound of the groveler. I was acquainted with the whisper of one who makes himself a partner in my crime and tells me: Stay here forever. Only you can save us. You brought us wealth. Liberty and freedom won't buy us bread. And this, too: We, the Arabs, need to be treated with a strong hand. We respect only the person who hits us. I listened, and tried to find out if the speaker could say something more than that, about what awaits the two peoples if the current situation continues,*

Do you think there is a chance at all, for Israelis to have an honest discourse with Palestinians? Is Grossman naïve?

### JEWS DON'T HAVE TAILS – David Grossman

In the heavy fog I almost did not find the village. It was a white and thick night, and low clouds rose in front of the car. I searched for the house, but the fog led me astray into the wrong alleys and sent me over dirt paths. Then I stopped struggling and allowed myself to travel at a crawl through the village, and then, for the first time, I could feel something soft and free before me, maybe because of the fog lying over the village, maybe because of the quiet and the late hour; in any case, the air was completely rid of that thing bitterly called “the conflict,” from the poison of the facts and interpretations and the enmity and the lingering memories. The Arabs were alone, and I was simply an undetected voyeur, and they were without us. From between the scraps of fog I saw a woman come out toward the doorway of her house, wiping up the drops of rain with a mop; a broom seller walked bent over, returning home after the day's work; in a corner of the street the headlights of a car lit up the warm secrets of a small grocery store, where two men sat playing backgammon. It was already 10 p.m. when I found myself outside Taher's large house. Taher is not his real name. He asked that I call him that, because the people here are still not willing to listen to his ideas. “Here they want to understand what you think right away: to know whether you are against the occupation or a collaborator and traitor. Black or white. They don't understand that there are several grades in between.” Taher is middle-aged. Somewhat heavy, with glasses, and quick of movement. His speech is swift, a little musical, as if each of his sentences were a question, and movements of his hands illuminate his words with improvised drawings. He asked me what I had heard from the people I had met in the area. I told him that only two days ago, in Beit Jala, one public figure told me that if we, the Israelis, were to leave the area, there would be a “second Beirut.” The Moslems would slaughter the Christians, and then each other. Taher answered immediately: “There will be a great slaughter. They will butcher each other on the bridge, anyone who is armed. Afterwards—the others: first they will kill whoever had any connection with Israel, and those who did business with Israel. And those suspected of collaboration with the mukhabarat, the intelligence service, and after they kill half of

the population here, they will begin killing each other in a struggle for power. But I think”—he smiled—“that if you leave our land, there will be a second Beirut among you as well, because your debate over us, about the territories, is what keeps you from the real disagreements you have among you, which you haven’t pursued for twenty years.” And if we stay here, I ask. “Even if you stay here, it will be the end of you. We are dismembering you from the inside. You are small and want to be a great empire. And as you grow, you will approach your end. Like a child’s balloon. And we are gaining strength in the meantime. We have more money, from working for you; we have identity, and that didn’t exist before; and we learn many things from you. And today there are many people among us who can send their children to college to study literature and history, as I did—who ever heard of sending a child who can work and bring in money to study, of all things, humanities?” And if we arrive at some arrangement under which we leave here and you have a government of your own? How do you see the country which will then be born? He smiles broadly. “That won’t be in my time or in yours. It’s a dream. If the Jordanians didn’t give me a government, do you think that Shamir will? Or Sharon? Peres won’t, either. Why waste strength on dreams? Even without that, life is hard for us. Here we live in constant fear that the time is approaching when you will expel all of us from our land. That, after all, is the only difference between your parties, the good ones and the bad ones: when to expel the Arabs. I need all the strength I have in order to live with that fear, and in order to live without freedom, and you ask me about dreams? We need to think only about the possible.” The conversation, by the way, was conducted in Hebrew: twenty days after the Six-Day War began, Taher went to Jerusalem and registered for the intensive Hebrew course at the Beit Ha’am community centre. “I knew that the Jews would be here in the West Bank for a long time.” How did you know? We ourselves weren’t sure that we would. “That’s because you still didn’t know how much it suits a person to be a conqueror. You thought then that you didn’t know how to be like that. But don’t forget that I had lived for twenty years under another occupation, the Jordanian, and that I am a much greater expert on conquerors than you are.”

And what did your neighbours in the village say when you began to learn Hebrew? “At first they said jasus [spy]. Afterwards, they quieted down and saw the truth.” And what is the truth? “What I said. That we need to learn from you, and take from you what you can give us. “If you leave here now and leave us alone—it will be very hard for us.” He explained: “You accustomed us to many things, and we aren’t what we once were. It would be as if you were to take us to the middle of a stormy sea and say to us: Get along on your own now. We aren’t ready for that yet. Maybe in another ten years, twenty years we will be. Not now. And we know that in our hearts—it’s just that no one dares say it out loud.” And in the meantime? “In the meantime, stay with us for a little bit longer. But change your attitude. Change your views. And start thinking about us in a totally different way.” How differently? “Start thinking about us not as your Arabs, asses that anyone can ride, people without

honour. Start thinking about us as your future neighbours. In the end we will be the people with whom you will have to live here and come to an agreement with and create ties with, and do business with, and everything, right? It's not the Japanese you will have to come to an agreement of peace and trust with, right? Even if there are five more wars here, the children of my grandchildren and the children of your grandchildren will finally get wise and make some sort of agreement with each other, right? So I say: Change your attitude a little, make some effort in our direction. Even try—and I know that it is probably hard for you, right?—try, God forbid, forbid, to respect us.” Taher speaks a fluent and special Hebrew. He studied for three years at the Hebrew University. Then he went into business. He has extensive links with Israel and his economic situation is good. Because of his Israeli connections, and because of the things he says, I at first suspected that he was telling me what he thought I wanted to hear. I wondered whether he was not deprecating himself; but I did him an injustice. I wanted to be sure that I was not mistaken: in the two months I travelled in the land of Ishmael, I heard once or twice the sickening sound of the groveler. I was acquainted with the whisper of one who makes himself a partner in my crime and tells me: Stay here forever. Only you can save us. You brought us wealth. Liberty and freedom won't buy us bread. And this, too: We, the Arabs, need to be treated with a strong hand. We respect only the person who hits us. I listened, and tried to find out if the speaker could say something more than that, about what awaits the two peoples if the current situation continues, and about the reality coming into being here. But I heard no more than the same whispers over and over again. There is no point in going into details: it does not matter who said these things—they are said by an enslaved man who has lost his divine image, and maybe doesn't realize it himself. More than likely he believes what he says with all his heart, but I want nothing to do with such people. You can never trust them. Not when they are under our control and not when we are allied with them. Taher, however, speaks his own free, original thought, without a trace of grovelling or desire to be liked. “Twenty years have passed,” he tells me, “twenty years during which we have been together. You already know that Arabs know what theatre is, and we know that Jews don't have tails. True, not everyone understands it fully. Sometimes I hear a mother here in the village shout at her child: If you don't eat, I'll tell a Jew to come and kill you! I tell her that she should be ashamed to speak that way, because if you teach your child to fear Jews, you ensure that he will do so all his life, and, after all, he needs to live together with them here, right?” He speaks with emotion, with urgency. Sweat gathers on his forehead, and his thick eyeglasses fog over, despite the coldness of the large, unheated house. For a moment he looks like a frightened attorney caught between two hot-headed disputants, trying to appeal to what remains of their reason, knowing that if they pounce on each other he will be the first to be crushed. “You also have much to learn: not to get into our souls, for example. Why do your soldiers need to stop me five times when I go to buy a sack of flour in the main street of Hebron? Why do they need to humiliate me at a roadblock in front of my children, who can see how the soldiers laugh at their father and force him to get out of the car? Of course, you have to behave like

conquerors. I don't deny that. That's the way history is: you won the war and we lost. I say, all right. Be conquerors. Push us, but with delicacy. Because sometimes you push so hard that we see how scared you are." Scared? Explain that. "Yes, yes. You should know that you're in a bad position. When I return from Amman, from visiting my brother, and one of your soldiers tells me to undress, and pokes his fingers down there, and checks my underwear, my hair, I look him in the eyes and think, My God, look how the entire Israeli government and the entire Israeli Army are scared of you, Taher. And then you seem to me like a great king who sits in his palace and places many guards around him, but doesn't sleep at night, because he knows that at any minute someone might come and take his crown away." But you know that our fears are well-founded. We have enemies, we are in danger, and we have to defend ourselves. "Yes, yes, that's right. But even if you are certainly justified in your searches and your roadblocks and all that—you yourselves feel in your hearts that this is not the right position for you. You want to be great conquerors like the Moslems of Mohammed were, like the Turks and like Napoleon, but on the other hand you want to be merciful and democratic like the English and like America, so what do you do? You make mistakes. Look, every year you have a new political party; anyone with any sense sets up another party, and why? Because no one understands what your country was originally meant to be, and no one remembers what they wanted to do, and believe me, when I sit down with a Jew (and I work with Jews all the time) I feel as if we are both of us in a prison under Israeli occupation." Then the door opens, and a sleepy child in pajamas comes in, turns to Taher, and jumps into his lap. A small boy, curly-haired, who walks barefoot across the painted floor tiles. Taher speaks to him with movements of his hands, mouthing words for emphasis, and the boy answers with more movements. Taher excuses himself and goes to put the boy to bed. When he returns, he tells me that he has two deaf-and-dumb children. They even studied for a time at the school for the deaf in Jerusalem, but they don't teach Arabic there. He speaks of his children naturally and lovingly, without a hint of reproach in his voice, and I understand without any explanation from him why he so urgently seeks to bring the extremes to reason together, to open their eyes to moderation and caution, and why he cannot surrender to any sort of dream.

Grossman, David. *The Yellow Wind* Random House. Kindle Edition.

## **Teaching The Maidservant's Son**

Emuna Elon was born in 1955 in Jerusalem, and raised both in Jerusalem and New York. She lived for many years in Beit El (A Settlement), and currently lives in Jerusalem. She was married to the late Rabbi Binyamin Elon, a former Knesset member, and is the mother of six children. The name Emuna means faith. She wrote four novels and many children books.

Her story **THE MAIDSERVANT'S SON** is fiction, yet it depicts life in the settlements for the settlers as well as for their Palestinian neighbors in the nearby refugee camp.

When teaching this text – your first question/dilemma is whether to teach and remind your students of the biblical story of Hagar and Yishmael or do you want them to discover the connection themselves?

Here are a few questions to accompany the reading or to be used for class discussion following the reading:

- How do you feel about the description of Ronit, the young settler?
- How do you feel about the description of Ibtisam – the Palestinian cleaning lady?
- Is there a message in these two juxtaposed women characters?
- How does each of the women, connect to their home? To their land? To each other?
- Is there a hope for a true closeness between the two?
- What is your takeaway from the end of the story?
- Would you teach this story in a Jewish day school in the USA, why? Why not?

## **THE MAIDSERVANT'S SON    Emunah Alon**

Soon after the new neighborhood was completed, even before the roads were paved and the last families had transferred their belongings from their temporary homes in the settlement to the red roofed houses which twinkled on the hilltop like a quaint Swiss village, Ronit's neighbors recommended that she employ the Arab cleaning woman who worked for them. "I've never had a cleaning woman before", Ronit protested, but her neighbors reminded her that she'd never owned a house on two levels with three bathrooms before, either. "You owe it to yourself", they assured her.



In the end, mainly to put an end to the subject, Ronit agreed to hire the Arab woman for a trial period. The neighbors promised to send her along for five hours every Wednesday, and sure enough, next Wednesday morning the cleaning-woman ascended the unfinished path and rang the front door bell loudly.

When Ronit opened the door she saw a red-cheeked Arab woman, her black hair gathered under a flowered head scarf, and a mocking smile on her face. Ronit knew that it couldn't really be a mocking smile - after all, the woman didn't even know her, so why would she mock her? Nevertheless she hesitated as she put out her hand, and her "Hello, my name is Ronit" sounded faint and childish to her ears.

"Ibtisam", the woman introduced herself, and, totally ignoring Ronit's outstretched hand, she marched into the house. She was about Ronit's height and approximately Ronit's age - thirty-five, but her shoulders were much wider and her body appeared very strong, as if cast in cement. After she entered Ronit closed the door, somewhat at a loss for words. Not only had she never employed a cleaning lady before, she had never before entertained an Arab woman of her own age in her home either.

Meanwhile Ibtisam strode into the middle of the wide new living room, swinging the plastic bag she held from side to side as she gazed around her, smiling her mocking smile the whole time. Ronit told herself that the other woman was merely trying to assess the amount of work that would be required of her, so she remarked politely, "I can show you the whole house, if you want."

"I can already see what's necessary", the Arab woman replied in guttural Hebrew. Without further ado she whipped a huge black apron out of her plastic bag and draped it over her colorful clothes. Then she hung the empty bag on a coat hook in the entryway, rolled up her sleeves, and instructed Ronit to provide her with a bucket, floor cloth, and bleach, so she could get to work.

Wednesday was once Ronit's favorite day of the week because it was the only day she didn't work at her job as secretary in a law office in Jerusalem, the only day she didn't have to leave for work early in the morning. Every Wednesday she enjoyed taking her young son to nursery school, stopping to gaze at the new flowers waving in the gardens. Together they would admire the size and charm of their community, and Ronit would tell her son that a few short years ago there was nothing here but a few terraced hills which had stood barren since the time of the patriarch Abraham. When they reached the top of the highest hill the child would indicate the large synagogue under construction, pointing proudly to the changes which had occurred since the previous Wednesday. It made Ronit smile to think of the Moslem laborers who from time to time stopped working on the synagogue to kneel facing Mecca. After taking leave of her son Ronit strolled home, stopping at the Post Office or chatting with neighbors, finally drinking a leisurely cup of coffee in her peaceful kitchen.

But from the time that Ibtisam took charge of the cleaning Wednesdays became burdensome, and by Tuesday afternoon Ronit was already nervous. Ibtisam preferred to start her work by washing all the floors, so Ronit was obliged to rearrange all the rooms in the house before she arrived, putting away all the clothes, the books and the toys, sweeping under beds and dressers and

emptying out the trash cans. Sometimes she toiled until the wee hours, which both astonished and annoyed her husband Haim. “Who’s working for whom?” he asked his wife, as he passed her on his way to bed at midnight, while she continued wiping kitchen appliances or folding towels. But Ronit dared not go to sleep before the entire house, with its two levels and its three bathrooms, was ready for a thorough scrubbing. The memory of Ibtisam’s mocking smile acted like a concentrated shot of adrenaline in her veins, and once she even found herself plucking dry leaves off a houseplant at three in the morning. On another occasion, busily cleaning the large mirror in the entry way until it shone, she was startled to hear, rolling over the hills, the *muezzin*’s summons to dawn prayers. The maidservant Hagar, who served our matriarch Sarah, always remembered her noble birth and never grew accustomed to the authority of her Hebrew mistress. But when Ibtisam rang the doorbell loudly, Ronit would open the door fearfully, retreating before her in dread. Ibtisam would swathe herself in her black tent, hang up her plastic bag and roll up her sleeves while Ronit hurried to bring the bucket, the floor cloth and the various cleaning materials which she was expected to line up on the floor. Then began the splashing of water, the beating of carpets and the scrubbing of floor tiles. The next duty of the lady of the house was to turn on the stereo radio and locate the Arabic station which Ibtisam most enjoyed, making sure that the volume was turned all the way up. While the sinuous eastern sounds penetrated every nook and cranny of her two story house, Ronit grabbed her shopping basket and rushed to the grocery store, because before tackling the second floor Ibtisam liked to drink a cup of very sweet coffee and eat two pitas with hummous, salad and olive oil, and she preferred newly baked pita with fresh vegetables.

Each song was at least as long as the Exile and the words were incomprehensible to Ronit, but judging by the wails of the singers and the melancholy gloom of the melodies they all dealt with unrequited love. Accompanied by these mournful strains Ronit stood in her spanking new American kitchen with its sparkling appliances, chopping vegetables for Ibtisam’s salad. Ibtisam found Jewish onions tasteless, so she brought two little onions from her garden, instructing Ronit to chop them well.

“That’s good”, Ibtisam would remark when she saw Ronit’s streaming eyes, and the mocking smile never left her red cheeks.

“Who’s working for whom?” Ronit muttered to herself, as she stared through her tears at the refugee camp opposite her kitchen window. There, on one of the gray hills on the far side of the Jerusalem-Shechem road, under the blazing sun of Eretz Israel, lived Ibtisam with her husband and six children. On her very first day at work Ibtisam had pulled Ronit over to the window above the Italian marble counter, to point to the camp. “That’s Jezoun”, she announced. Ronit gazed at the heap of miserable huts dotted here and there by pecan and olive trees and encircled with a stone wall. “Is that your home?” inquired Ronit. The Arab woman chortled. “That’s nobody’s home”, she explained, “Jezoun isn’t a village at all, it’s just the place where we’re waiting until we can go back to our land.”

Ronit wondered silently how they intended to return to their land two generations after a kibbutz or a university had been established on it. She regretted that the architect had placed the kitchen window precisely at that spot, facing the road and the camp. “We haven’t returned to the land of our forefathers in order to solve the problems of other nations”, she told herself, and went to the



plant nursery where she bought five cypress saplings in black plastic bags. Haim suggested that they exchange them for fruit trees but Ronit wanted evergreens which would grow quickly, planted closely together in a row opposite her kitchen window to block the embarrassing view.

Trucks delivered dark earth and fertilizer to the yards of the new houses in the new neighborhood. Ronit's children planted the roots of the small cypresses in the earth. Ronit hoed the garden bed, sprinkled it with chemical fertilizer and watered it daily. She even considered playing classical music to the saplings because she had read somewhere that it encourages growth. She had second thoughts when she realized that she was not at all acquainted with the musical preferences of Samarian cypresses. Would they prefer Schubert's symphonies, or songs of unrequited love, accompanied by oud and derbouka? She decided to settle for fertilizer.

For three years Ibtisam cleaned Ronit's house. During that time the community grew and developed. The synagogue stood imposingly on the top of its hill, and a new wave of families moved from their temporary houses into the white buildings of a new neighborhood.

For three years Ronit wept over the sharp onions which Ibtisam had cultivated in her temporary garden in the refugee camp. Every few months she raised Ibtisam's salary without been asked, and in return the cleaning woman invited her to sit at her side during her meal of pita and hear about her hard life: her husband, who worked as a plasterer for an Israeli building firm, missed many workdays when the government imposed closure on the Arabs living in the territories. Her elderly father feared that he would go blind before he realized his life's dream - to see the village on the coastal plain where he was born. And her son, Adnan, had been severely beaten by the young men of Jezoun, who erroneously suspected him of collaborating with the Israeli army.

It's possible that Ronit was attempting to pacify Ibtisam, or maybe she wanted to compensate her. "What's mine is yours, and what's yours is yours", she would think, hearing the words of Rabbi Akiva in Ibtisam's guttural accent, as she handed her a pile of children's clothes, hardly used toys or an aluminum pot large enough to prepare food for an entire family. One day she even went through her own clothes and picked out two outfits for Ibtisam. They were her personal favorites, being both elegant and comfortable, but she preferred to hand them over to this refugee whose size was similar to her own.

Ibtisam received all these offerings with a nod of her head, thrusting them into her bag before hurrying to scrub the three toilets, or brush the sofas and release clouds of dust.

By the end of three years the five cypresses had reached the height of the window, but they didn't yet conceal the heap of gray shacks from Ronit's view. They also didn't screen the road where our forefathers passed on their way to Shechem or the smoke which rose every day or so from the tires which the refugee children burned on the same road.

Early one winter's evening Ronit was startled by a long, loud peal at the doorbell. It was Sunday evening, not Wednesday morning, but when Ronit opened the door the Arab woman stood before her, her shoulders drooping.

"Ibtisam!"

“Do you have visitors, Ronit?”

“No. What’s going on?”

Ibtisam called something over her shoulder and hoisted a cloth bundle lying at her feet. A tall lad appeared hesitantly in the doorway. He looked like a young god. His curly hair was the color of mountain earth, he had delicate, sculpted features and his green eyes glowed from under long, thick lashes.

Ibtisam hurried him into the house, following hard on his heels with the bundle. Agitatedly she explained: “This is Adnan, my oldest child. Some people from Nablus are coming to kill him tonight!”

She was trembling. Her eighteen year old son stood with hanging head, his hands behind his back as if handcuffed.

“I’ve brought him to you,” pleaded Ibtisam, “because we have nowhere to run to”.

Ronit leant against the wall. The walls seemed to spin around her. Out of the corner of her eye she saw her children watching silently from the stairwell.

“Sit down”, she finally blurted out, indicating the sofas in the living room. The smile that crept over Ibtisam’s face as she sank into the sofa cushions was not one of mockery but of simple gratitude.

“What will you drink?” asked Ronit, hurrying to the kitchen to prepare a tray for her guests.

Ibtisam sipped some coca cola, while Adnan sat on the edge of his seat, keeping a watchful eye on the large French window facing the hills. He wore the almost-new jeans which until recently had belonged to Ronit’s daughter. As a rule people get rid of clothes when they don’t need them anymore. Our matriarch Sara even got rid of her maidservant Hagar when she had no more use for her. But Ronit often gave Ibtisam new or hardly-used clothing she had bought for her own children.

Adnan is a golden child, explained Ibtisam, rocking mournfully to and fro, but the Jezoun *shabab* (streetgangs) suspect him of collaborating with Israelis. Perhaps it’s because he has worked a great deal among Jews and learned to speak Hebrew like an Israeli, or perhaps they simply envy him because he’s so clever and kind-hearted. Maybe they think he’s following in the footsteps of his uncle Badr (Ibtisam’s younger brother), who was indeed working for the Jewish army until the Jihad operatives caught him and left his head next to the mosque in the camp. Ever since Badr died the *shabab* were after Adnan, because they knew he was very close to his uncle. But Adnan never betrayed Palestine, cried Ibtisam, he would never do such a thing. The camp hooligans had falsely accused him and now the Jihad people were coming to kill him because they believed the *shabab*.

“And he,” hissed Ibtisam furiously, with a nod to indicate Adnan, “at first he refused to come here. I said to him, ‘let’s run away’ but he said one must not flee from the Jihad, because in the end they always get their way, and if they want to kill someone - he’s dead!”

Adnan hung his head on his slender neck, while Ibtisam hid her face in her large, callused hands. Tormented and afflicted, Hagar and Ishmael her son were driven from the home of Abraham. Alone and helpless they wandered in the wilderness. But now they had returned to give Sarah’s offspring a second chance.

Ronit felt strong and powerful. She instructed her two older children to clear their room for the guests and move in with their younger brothers.

“Thank you, miss”, murmured Adnan, as his beautiful olive eyes glanced round the tidy room with its freshly-made bed and the picture on the wall, depicting a ship in full sail on a deep blue sea. In a low voice, so his mother wouldn’t hear, he added: “But my place is not here.”

“Not here?” Ronit repeated.

“I should be in Jezoun now”, he replied sadly, but said no more.

Ronit carefully prepared a meal for her guests. She fried wiener schnitzel and chopped vegetables for a salad, making sure to choose the smallest, sharpest onions, and letting her tears flow freely.

After the meal Ibtisam returned to Jezoun, but not before she kissed Ronit’s hand and whispered: “You’re a good Jew. I won’t forget this.”

She parted from her son with a fierce hug and a brief argument conducted quietly and hopelessly in Arabic. Adnan shut himself up in the bedroom which the older children had vacated. When Haim returned from work the house was as quiet as an abandoned Arab village. Ronit had nearly finished washing the dishes.

Haim listened to his wife’s tale with a smile on his face, as he watched the evening news on television. “You don’t say”, he remarked, each time her torrent of words stopped for a moment, “You don’t say, you don’t say”. It was only when she expressed her concern for Adnan, who looked so miserable and hardly ate anything that Haim burst out laughing. “Loss of appetite should be his biggest problem”, he declared.

Ronit awoke at dawn to the sounds of the muezzin echoing off the hills, and thought of Adnan safely asleep in her house. She listened to the seven o’ clock news as she prepared to leave for the lawyers’ office, pouring cocoa for the children and packing their lunches. Suddenly her ear caught the announcement of a killing which had taken place during the night in Jezoun refugee camp in the heart of Samaria. The radio announcer reported that security forces were investigating the murder to ascertain whether the victim was suspected of collaborating with Israel.

“I saved Ishmael last night”, Ronit told herself joyfully. Just then the doorbell rang loudly and Ibtisam burst into the house, barefoot and dressed in her black work clothes. Her eyes darted around the room and she was breathing heavily. “Good morning, Ibtisam”, said Ronit, but for the poor refugee it was apparently a bad morning, because she stood in the doorway with her hand on her heart, as if she feared she would lose it. “The Jihad killed someone in Jezoun” , she sobbed. Her voice was that of a wounded animal. “They burnt him and placed him next to the mosque - he’s all black... all burnt... he’s unrecognizable... you can’t even see what he’s wearing... I couldn’t see if it was Adnan or not...”

“But Adnan’s here, fast asleep”, Ronit tried to soothe her. She didn’t understand why Ibtisam flew up the stairs to the second floor and flung open the door of the bedroom, until she saw her fall at the foot of the empty bed with its clean sheets, exactly as it had been prepared the night before.

Ronit stood there, stunned. In her hand she gripped the breadknife. Her children stood by her side, ready for school. They all watched as Ibtisam descended the stairs in terrible, bitter silence, clawing at her face until it was streaked with blood, plucking at her long black hair, which had escaped from the flowered head scarf. She raged and stormed, but not a sound escaped her.

As she left she encountered Haim, returning from morning prayers in the synagogue. Silently she fled to the back of the house, between the five young cypresses - and only there, beyond the line of trees, did she fling out her arms and rend the heavens with her terrible cries, running to and fro, wailing her agony to the impervious skies. Her robe flew around her like a tent. Her bare feet trampled over thorns and rocks as she descended the hill on the winding path to Jezoun refugee camp.

## **Challenge II**

### **○ The First Lebanon War (1981)**

#### **Introduction**

The second challenge of this unit is the first war in Lebanon. Focusing mainly on the tragic massacre of Sabra and Shatila – two Palestinian refugee camps raided by Christian Militias, while Israeli troops were nearby and offered no help.

Two Dalia Ravitovich poems capture the spirit of those days, when Israeli soldiers were responsible for the forced evacuation of Palestinian troops and civilians out of Lebanon. To be followed by their role of silent bystanders during the above mentioned massacre.

These events had a serious impact on Israeli society. They caused the largest demonstration ever in the history of the state. An investigation committee was called to look into the involvement of the IDF as well as the responsibility of the Minister of Defence – Ariel Sharon.

Ehud Manor's song Ein Li Eretz Acheret – I Have No Other Land – composed at the time, remains in collective memory as the popular call to take responsibility and speak up when one's homeland needs to be reprimanded.

#### **Introduction**

You may want to start teaching this unit, by reviewing a short and simple timeline of the first Lebanon War in 1982.

It is hard to decide, when exactly this war starts. A good starting point may be the events called Black September. The 1970-71 armed conflict between King Hussein of Jordan and the PLO, based in Jordan at the time, under the command of Yassar Arafat. As a result the PLO was expelled from Jordan and settled in southern Lebanon close to the Israeli border.

Use slide 4 of the 1978-1988 Challenges PowerPoint presentation to review the history and the exact time when each of the poems we are discussing here, was published.

For your teaching, consider including at least a short excerpt from the movie-Waltz with Bashir – created in 2008. It is probably the best articulation of the trauma many Israeli soldiers carry from that war. See slide 7 for links to excerpt and/or whole movie.

## Teaching **Get Out of Beirut**

Start your teaching with slide 5 for a picture of Dalia Ravikowitch and the original poem as it had appeared in Haaretz during the Lebanon war.

I think knowing that the poem was an immediate reaction to the events may better inform the learners.

After Israel had practically destroyed the Palestinian hold on southern Lebanon, it reached Beirut and imposed a forced evacuation on the Palestinians who had fled there.

The PLO had negotiated an agreement with Tunisia to be accepted there and they were embarking on boats to go there. Leaving behind their home of recent years and most of their property.

Israeli soldiers supervising this “deportation” and it is hard to avoid, thoughts about the reversal of roles. The situation does not have to be identical to that of the Holocaust, in order to bring out the demons.

The voice expressed in the poem – all the way to the last line is angry, full of hatred toward the victims and urging the refugees to go already.

See footnotes for more detailed information:

The Poem is hard to read. One would expect an Israeli poet to describe Israeli soldiers as companionate towards the enemy – Dalia Ravikowitch gives voice to the inevitable – the transformation of soul of those who are part of this violence. They have suffered losses, they have faced danger, and they have been wounded and shocked. Now they have come to this.

### **Get Out of Beirut - Dahlia Ravikovitch**

Take the knapsacks  
and the utensils and washtubs  
and the books of the Koran  
and the army fatigues  
and the **tall tales** and the **torn soul**<sup>43</sup>  
and whatever's left, bread or meat,  
and kids running around like chickens in the village.  
**How many children do you have?**

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<sup>43</sup> Note how the two comments in this line are juxtaposed “tall tales” is derogative and making fun of alleged Arab customs to exaggerate, while the second recognizes the pain and suffering.

How many children did you have?

It's hard to keep tabs on kids in a situation like this.<sup>44</sup>

Not like in the old country

in the shade of the mosque and the fig tree,<sup>45</sup>

when the children the children would be shoed outside by day  
and put to bed at night.

Put whatever isn't fragile into sacks,  
clothes and blankets and bedding and diapers

and something for a souvenir

like a shiny artillery shell perhaps,<sup>46</sup>

or some kind of useful tool,

and the babies with rheumy eyes

and the R.P.G. kids.<sup>47</sup>

We want to see you in the water, sailing aimlessly  
with no harbor and no shore.

You won't be accepted anywhere

You are banished human beings.

You are people who don't count

You are people who aren't needed

You are a pinch of lice

stinging and itching

to madness.<sup>48</sup>

Translated from the original Hebrew by Karen Alkalay-Gut.

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<sup>44</sup> I think this can be read as a sarcastic remark – Israelis often criticize Arabs for not caring that much about their children.

<sup>45</sup> Reference to the homeland of these people –Palestine – thus a reference to the Nakba, which is always problematic in Israeli poetry. D.R. describes a normal life they had enjoyed and lost.

<sup>46</sup> Again mockery of Palestinians who may like to have war souvenirs, yet we in Israel know, how many of us have done just the same.

<sup>47</sup> Recognizing the facts as they are;- these kids now refugees, have also participated actively in the fighting.

<sup>48</sup> The last lines of the poem – express the hatred, anger, frustration of the soldiers doing their job, harnessing these harsh feelings probably needed to execute their task.

## לצאת מביירות – דליה רביקוביץ'

קחו את התרמילים  
ואת הג'ארות והפיילות  
ואת ספרי הקוראן  
ומדי קרב של חיילים  
ואת הדאווין והנפש הקרועה  
ומה שנשאר, לחם או בשר,  
וילדים מתרוצצים כמו תרנגולות בכפר.  
כמה ילדים יש לכם?  
כמה ילדים היו לכם?  
קשה לשמור במצב כזה על הילדים.  
לא כמו שהיה בארץ הישנה  
בצל המסגד והתאנה  
שהיו מגרשים את הילדים החוצה ביום  
ומשכיבים אותם לישון בלילה.  
אספו אל השקים מה שאינו שביר,  
בגדים ושמיכות וכלי מיטה וחיתולים  
ומשהו למזכרת  
אולי תרמיל פגז מבריק,  
או כלי שיש לו ערך שימושי,  
ואת התינוקות עם המגלה בעיניים  
ואת ילדי האר.פי.גי.  
אנחנו רוצים לראות אתכם שטים  
במים, שטים בלי מטרه  
ללא נמל ובלי חופים.  
לא יקבלו אתכם בשום מקום  
אתם בני אדם מגורשים.  
אתם אנשים לא נחשבים  
אתם אנשים לא דרושים.  
אתם קומץ כינים עוקצות ומגרדות  
עד לשגעון.



## Teaching: “A Baby Can’t Be Killed Twice”

Before teaching this poem, make sure, students are aware of the basic facts of the [Sabra and Shatila Massacre](#). This is a link to the Wikipedia article, there are many other sources. Israeli troops were in the vicinity and were accused not of the massacre itself but for not helping those who had managed to escape and also for helping the militias by illuminating the camps during the massacre.

When knowledge of the tragedy reached the press – it came as a devastating shock to most Israelis. Huge demonstrations followed demanding an investigation.

The poem is written and published immediately following the event and reflects the horror of it all.

Waltz with Bashir- the movie produced in 2008, is a later, more mature reaction of Israeli soldiers to the Lebanon trauma in general and to the massacre in particular.

## A Baby Can't Be Killed Twice

On the sewage puddles of Sabra and Shatila  
there you transferred masses of human beings  
worthy of respect  
from the world of the living to the world of the dead.

Night after night.

First they shot  
then they hung  
and finally slaughtered with knives.

Terrified women rushed up  
from over the dust hills:

"There they slaughter us  
in Shatila."

A narrow tail of the new moon hung  
above the camps.<sup>49</sup>

Our soldiers illuminated the place with flares  
like daylight.

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<sup>49</sup> The Sabra and Shatila Massacre took place during Rosh Hashanah – the beginning of the lunar month – no moon

"Back to the camps, March!" the soldier commanded  
the screaming women of Sabra and Shatila.

He had orders to follow,<sup>50</sup>

And the children were already laid in the puddles of waste,  
their mouths open,  
at rest.

No one will harm them.

A baby can't be killed twice.

And the tail of the moon filled out  
until it turned into a loaf of whole gold.

Our dear sweet soldiers,  
asked nothing for themselves—

how strong was their hunger  
to return home in peace.<sup>51</sup>

Translated from the original Hebrew by Karen Alkalay-Gut.

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<sup>50</sup> In the arsenal of reasons and excuses- this line is the worst as far as Jewish soldiers are concerned, as it is always associated with what the Nazis had said about their deeds

<sup>51</sup> For the Israeli reader, this line is sarcastic as it quotes a line from a song made famous after the 1967 Six Day war. There a soldier fighting at Ammunition Hill in Jerusalem, claims he does not know why he was decorated, since all he had wanted was to go home peacefully. When the line is used in this context – no heroic act, no call for decoration – yet soldiers just wish they did not have to be there.

### **תינוק לא הורגים פעמיים**

על שלוליות שופכין בסברה ושתילה  
שם העברתם כמויות של בני אדם  
הראויות להתכבד  
מעולם החי לעולם האמת.

לילה אחר לילה.

קודם ירו

אחר כך תלו

לבסוף שחטו בסכינים.

נשים מבוהלות הופיעו בדחיפות

מעל תלולית עפר:

"שם שוחטים אותנו,

בשתילה."

זנב דק של ירח בן ראשית החודש היה  
תלוי

מעל למחנות.

חיילינו שלנו האירו את המקום בנורים

כאור יום.

"לחזור למחנה, מארש!" ציווה החייל

לנשים הצורחות מסברה ושתילה.

היו לו פקודות למלא.

והילדים היו כבר מונחים בשלוליות

הסחי,

פיהם פעור

שלוים.

איש לא ייגע בהם לרעה.

תינוק לא הורגים פעמיים.

וזנב הירח הלך והתמלא

עד שהפך כיכר זהב מלאה.

חיילים מתוקים שלנו,

דבר לא ביקשו לעצמם,

מה עזה הייתה תשוקתם

לחזור הביתה בשלום.

## Teaching I have No Other Land and conclusion

When Ehud Manor, had passed away in 2005, Yediot Aharonot – Israel's largest daily paper at the time, ran a survey about all the songs he had written (hundreds) Ein LI Eretz Acheret, came up first as his most beloved of all. Composed actually in memory of his fallen brother, the song was adopted by the demonstrators following the war in Lebanon. Ever since it was and still is picked up by any sort of movement that wants to combine total loyalty to the land and state, while at the same time feeling the obligation to speak up when needed.

It is in this spirit that it needs to be read and hopefully sung in your teachings. Slide 6 has the link and the visual information.

Follow the annotated text for further insights.

As this song concludes our unit, you may want to use it as a springboard to a more general discussion about its message.

The song was composed in the early eighties, when Israel was going through major changes, between the split over the settlements, the war in Lebanon and the still relatively new right wing governments. Ehud Manor's song echoes this and creates the language of commitment and critic.

### I HAVE NO OTHER HOME LAND

Ehud Manor

Translated by: Karen Alkalay-Gut

I have no other **homeland**  
**though my earth is aflame**<sup>52</sup>  
a **word in Hebrew**<sup>53</sup> alone  
pierces through my veins to my soul -  
with aching body, with hungry heart,  
Here is my home.  
**I will not stay silent**  
**that the face of my land has changed**<sup>54</sup>  
I won't give up but keep reminding her --  
singing in her ears  
until she opens her eyes  
I have no other country  
though my land is burning  
only a word in Hebrew  
pierces my veins my soul -

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<sup>52</sup> The poet expresses commitment to Israel even while it may be burning – thus – in war time or peace the commitment is unwavering.

<sup>53</sup> It may be interesting to note, and even discuss in class, why of all the great, exciting achievements of the state, the one the poet picks up is, the revival of the Hebrew language.

<sup>54</sup> Here is the line that may seem contradictory to many – yet to me it is absolutely complementary; with commitment comes the obligation to speak up, when your land needs to hear some criticism.-

with aching body, hungering in my heart,  
this is my home.

I will not remain quiet  
though the face of my land has changed

**I won't stop reminding her --<sup>55</sup>**

singing in her ears

until she opens her eyes

I have no other country

until she renews her days of old

until she opens her eyes

I have no other country

though my land is burning

only a word in Hebrew

pierces my veins my soul -

with aching body, hungering in my heart,  
this is my home.

## אין לי ארץ אחרת

אהוד מנור

אין לי ארץ אחרת  
גם אם אדמתי בוערת  
רק מילה בעברית חודרת  
אל עורקיי, אל נשמתי  
בגוף כואב, בלב רעב  
כאן הוא ביתי

לא אשתוק, כי ארצי  
שינתה את פניה  
לא אוותר להזכיר לה,  
ואשיר גם באוזניה  
עד שתפקח את עיניה

אין לי ארץ אחרת  
גם אם אדמתי בוערת  
רק מילה בעברית חודרת  
אל עורקיי, אל נשמתי  
בגוף כואב, בלב רעב  
כאן הוא ביתי

לא אשתוק, כי ארצי  
שינתה את פניה  
לא אוותר להזכיר לה,  
ואשיר גם באוזניה  
עד שתפקח את עיניה

או או או או...

אין לי ארץ אחרת  
עד שתחדש ימיה  
עד שתפקח את עיניה

<sup>55</sup> The promise to reprimand is an ongoing one and needs as long a commitment as the initial one to the land itself.