

# Israel @ 70

Achievements and Challenges

Through the Eyes of Contemporary Israeli Literature

Zot Hashira - Study Kit

1978 - 1988

The Fourth Decade

Students Source Sheets

1978 - 1988  
The Forth Decade  
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## Achievement I Settlements

### Mashiach Pains

When I walk  
Without a wherefrom, without a whereto  
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

Mashiach pains, here they come

There are times I tak  
A blow upon a blow  
When things turn bad and bitter  
Is just when  
Sing to myself, just sing to my self

Mashiach pains , here they come

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.

Mashiach pains... here they come

חבלי משיח - נעמי שמר

כאשר אני הולך  
בלי אין ובלי אן  
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  
שפתיהם 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...

## To the Waterholes

Naomi Shemer

It is out of love  
I went to the waterholes  
By desert routes  
Through an unsawn land  
It is out of love  
I forgot town and home  
In your footsteps  
With savage yearning.

To the waterholes, to the waterholes  
To the spring palpitating in the mountain  
It is there, my love will still find  
Fountain waters  
Depth waters  
River waters

Only my love  
Gave me shade in the summer  
And during the terrible sand storm  
Only my love  
Built me a town and a home  
It is my life  
It is my death every hour

To the waterholes...

The fig tree is there  
And so are the olive saplings  
Also the magical blooming of pomegranates  
The is my love  
Drunk not by wine  
Slowly closing its eyes

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...

We who push for the End of Days<sup>1</sup> Hagai Segal

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

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>2</sup> and the line of the horizon. With no guard duties, no taxes to "Amana"<sup>3</sup> and no American intelligence satellite above our heads 24 hours a day. In the city of diamonds<sup>4</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>5</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>6</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"

"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.

<sup>1</sup> Pushing the End – לדחוק את הקץ refers to people who are not waiting for Mashiah but rather acting towards messianic days -

<sup>2</sup> Israel's pre June 1967 border

<sup>3</sup> A settlement movement

<sup>4</sup> Natanya – was the centre of diamond polishing industry

<sup>5</sup> Not only is this a typically Ashkenazi name, it also means breakfast in Yiddish

<sup>6</sup> The movement for greater Israel, supporting settlement in all its parts

Commented [WU1]:

“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>7</sup> settlements had two months to prepare....”

Her spoiled behaviour 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>8</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>9</sup> to Daharia<sup>10</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.

“With all other Geula (Salvation) refuseniks, the generation of knitted kipot will never crawl with the exasperating slowness of their beret 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 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”.

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<sup>7</sup> A Jewish settlement project under the British Mandate – building Kibbutzim overnight

<sup>8</sup> Jewish underground combat unit of the anti-British Haganah underground

<sup>9</sup> Arab town within green line Israel

<sup>10</sup> Palestinian refugee camp across the green line

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. 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”.

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 אהישנה”<sup>11</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 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.

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<sup>11</sup> An expression used for the time of the arrival of Mashiach

Honestly, the most successful demonstrations in the history of the Yesh"ra<sup>12</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>13</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>12</sup> Judea, Samaria and Gaza

<sup>13</sup> Kings of Israel Square now known as Rabin Square



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

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 flawing 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 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" 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: "Bar 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 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 very moved.

His daughter, standing by him who was had 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".

## Achievement II The Evacuation of Yamit

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

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 Choshen (breastplate) nor Ephod, but  
Tzitz (golden head plate)

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)  
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

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  
To the sap of intimate chambers, 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

עיר ימים ספורים – יונדב קפלון

משירי ימית

1.

לא יפה להלל,  
שכורה ולא מיין  
חול ישק גבולה שמשוה 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  
כחרהור  
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 ממזוזת חלון, מכוה  
עד לשד חדרי יהוד, עלטה  
לעיני – כתמרות חיים

הרוכים

ראו עיני פוסטר האובדים  
נעוץ בשער השמים

A kettle, a bench a table  
Bleeding, taking a crushing support  
To your shame

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

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 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.

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?

קומקום. דרגש, שלחן  
זב דם, להרפתך 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 לאחרי מחר.

.7  
ובצור הוא עבור.

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

.9  
מה נעשה עוד בעיר  
וישתוק הים מעליו. 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 נצה.  
ומי יתן דמו לדיו?

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.

12.

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

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

Shvat 5743 January 1983

.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

## Father's Song – Naomi Shemer

If, on the mountain you have hewed a stone  
If, on the mountain, you have hewed a stone for a new  
building

You did not hew, in vain for a new building  
Because the Temple will be built of these stone

The Temple will be built, will be built...

If, on the mountain, you planted a cedar to replace a  
thorn

If, on the mountain, you have planted a cedar to  
replace a thorn

It is not in vain that you have planted the cedar to  
replace a thorn

Because the Temple will be built of these cedars

The Mountain will be built, will be built

If you have not sung, for me yet, sing for me an  
ancient psalm

Which is older than wine and sweeter than honey.

A song that is older than wine and sweeter than honey

A song which is two thousand years old, yet new  
every day.

שירו של אבא  
מילים ולחן: נעמי שמר

אם בהר חצבת אבן להקים בנין חדש  
אם בהר חצבת אבן להקים בנין חדש  
לא לשווא אחי חצבת לבנין חדש  
כי מן האבנים האלה יבנה מקדש

ייבנה, ייבנה, ייבנה המקדש

אם בהר נטעת ארוז, ארוז במקום דרדר  
אם בהר נטעת ארוז, ארוז במקום דרדר  
לא לשווא אחי נטעת במקום דרדר  
כי מן הארזים האלה ייבנה ההר

ייבנה, ייבנה, ייבנה ההר

אם לא שרת לי שיר עדיין, שירה לי  
מזמור חדש

שהוא עתיק מיין ומתוק מדבש  
שיר שהוא עתיק מיין ומתוק מדבש  
שיר שהוא כבן אלפיים ובכל יום חדש

ייבנה, ייבנה, ייבנה המקדש

**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 האישה השב הביתה  
מן המרחקים .

על כל אלה, על כל אלה ,  
שמור בא 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  
ועל זה השיר .

Farewell to Sinai Haim Hefer

There is time to give birth, time  
There is time to plant and time to uproot, time.  
The 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.

The 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.

I am spreading my wings...

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  
בצלקות 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**

**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 Tahers’ 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 jасus [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.

### 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

### o The First Lebanon War (1981)

#### 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.  
Our soldiers illuminated the place with flares  
like daylight.

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

He had orders to follow,  
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.

Translated from the original Hebrew by Karen Alkalay-Gut.

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  
שלווים.  
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.

### **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  
and whatever's left, bread or meat,  
and kids running around like chickens in the village.  
How many children do you have?  
How many children did you have?  
It's hard to keep tabs on kids in a situation like this.  
Not like in the old country  
in the shade of the mosque and the fig tree,  
when the children the children would be shooed 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,  
or some kind of useful tool,  
and the babies with rheumy eyes  
and the R.P.G. kids.  
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.

Translated from the original Hebrew by Karen Alkalay-Gut.

### 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 בעינים  
ואת ילדי האר.פי.גי.  
אנחנו רוצים לראות אתכם שטים  
במים, שטים בלי מטרה  
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.

### I HAVE NO OTHER HOME LAND

Ehud Manor

Translated by: Karen Alkalay-Gut

I have no other homeland  
though my earth is aflame  
a word in Hebrew 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  
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 -  
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 --  
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  
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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