



הסתדרות הציונית העולמית
World Zionist Organization

המחלקה לפעילות בתפוצות
Department for Diaspora Activities

Beit Ha'am

Z-Talks

בית העם

שיג ושיח ציוני

Leadership Near and Far
The Right to Doubt



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Main Editor: Gusti Yehoshua Braverman

Coordinator & Production: Noa Marom

Research & Compilation: Shlomo Fox, Gusti Yehoshua-Braverman

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**“From the place where
we are right
Flowers will never grow
In the spring.”
Yehuda Amichai**

The *Beit Ha'am* program was developed by the Department for Diaspora Activities in the World Zionist Organization to encourage discussion on the subject of Zionist identity and attitudes to the State of Israel.

The program includes diverse traditional and modern texts on a range of subjects. Through encounter with these texts, we hope to encourage lively discussion of Zionist identity among Diaspora Jews in general, and the younger generation, in particular.

The discussion will address what binds the Jewish people, wherever they may be, as well as what divides and separates us.

We will consider the meaning of Jewish political independence of the people dwelling in Zion and the reciprocal relationships between Jews living in Israel and those who live in the Diaspora.

This represents an opportunity for everyone, irrespective of prior knowledge, to get to know and enhance their knowledge about the significance of Zionism in the 21st century, to engage in discussion, reflect on its substance and the extent of its relevance to our lives.

The *Beit Ha'am* program is currently available in Hebrew and English, and will be translated into other languages according to demand.

If you are interested in using the *Beit Ha'am* program, or would like to hear more about training counselors to work with the program, please contact the Department for Diaspora Activities at maromnoa@wzo.org.il



Leadership Near and Far: The Right to Doubt

The verse “take your shoes off your feet” was uttered to Moses just before the Redemption from Egypt

Exodus 3:1-5

“Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. So Moses thought, ‘I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up.’ When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, ‘Moses! Moses!’ And Moses said, ‘Here I am.’ “Do not come any closer,’ God said. “Take your shoes off your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.”

The same saying appears just before Joshua conquers the Land of Israel

Joshua 10:13-15

*“Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, ‘Are you for us or for our enemies?’ ‘Neither,’ he replied, ‘but as commander of the army of the Lord I have now come.’ Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence, and asked him, ‘What message does my Lord have for his servant?’ The commander of the Lord’s army replied, ‘**Take your shoes off your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.**’ And Joshua did so.*

“In Every Place” – Rabbi Moshe of Kubrin

The Holy One, blessed be He, says the same thing to every person that He said to Moses – “take your shoes off your feet” – “remove the lock from your habits.” Recognize that the place where you are standing is holy ground. You must always know and recall, wherever and whenever, God’s holiness.

As Bible says– **“take your shoes off your feet.”** By changing the Hebrew words for “shoes” and “feet” just a little, we can change this sentence to read **“remove the lock from your habits”** -

We learn from this that when one is about to save or be saved, or about to go to war, one must take care not to think in fixed patterns, but to think outside the box. Remove the lock from your habits.

“Take your shoes off your feet.”

Leadership

A. Anecdote:

David Ben Gurion and Berl Katzenelson were walking in the desert when a tiger suddenly appeared in their way. Berl launched into a long description of the danger the tiger posed, knowledgeably expounding details of its strength. Ben Gurion responded: “It’s basically one of the cat family! Let’s keep going!”

Why did David Ben Gurion reach positions of national importance, while Berl Katzenelson, the intellectual, never became a leader?



Everything Changes, Bertholt Brecht

Everything changes. You can make
A fresh start with your latest breath.
But what has happened has happened. And the water
You once poured into the wine cannot be
Drained off again.

What has happened has happened. The water
You once poured into the wine cannot be
Drained off again, but
Everything changes. You can make
A fresh start with your latest breath.

From: **Essential Brecht Poems**, Methuen Publishing Ltd., 1995

Marks, Dalia Yairi ?!

If only exclamation mark would bend over a little
Lowering their heads to the ground
Hesitating slightly, letting go of their arrogant rigid stance
Seeking to get down –
If not to the bottom of the matter, then at least to the matter
itself.
Perhaps some things properly belong
Within parentheses or inverted commas
Perhaps three suggestive periods should be added –
“That’s not the whole story”...

If only exclamation points would curve around, and become
Hunchbacked question marks
Stooping under the burden of bubbling
Worrying, searching, piercing doubts
Shaking the organs of denial until
Their contents are doomed to memory.
And if not – at least casting doubt
On that which they sought to obliterate. Or to hide
In lines ending in an exclamation mark.

*** To what extent should one try to read each mark differently – to round out, to bend the exclamation mark that stands upright!**
*** In relation to our own leadership, when do we need to insert exclamation marks and when do we need to add question marks? What is the price for each of these marks? Is it permissible to place question marks in relation to Israel's leadership from outside its borders? What should be the exclamation mark in relation to criticism of Israel and/or its policies? What is the leader's role in placing those marks?**

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מנהיגות מקרוב ומרחוק
הזכות להטלת ספק

