

Education for the Love of the Land

(Activity for High School Students and Youths)

1. **Introduction:** Question: A place I like in the land, a place that is a home for me, a place I recall from excitement on a trip.

2. **A Nation Formed in the Diaspora:** Significant portions of the culture of the Jewish nation known to us were formulated throughout the years of exile and were influenced by this circumstantial condition. A dispersed nation, longings to the unknown homeland, a culture that is not connected to a particular location. Examples for this can be depicted in the holidays:
 - Shavuot – Transformation from 'The Holiday of Harvest' to 'The Holiday of the Giving of the Torah'.
 - Passover – Instead of bringing the Pesach offering – recital of 'Next Year in Jerusalem'.
 - Sukkot – More emphasis on 'The Happiness with the Torah' than on 'The Holiday of Ingathering'.
 - Tu Bishvat – From a day of calculating the years of dedicating tithes of one's produce grown on trees, to a day of longing for the land of Israel via the 'Order of Tu Bishvat' and consuming fruits.

3. **If Only We Were in the Land of Israel:** Reading of a passage on Rabbi Mendel.
 - What attitude to the land of Israel does the passage express?
 - What change does Rabbi Mendel hope for? Does this change materialize? (with Zionism, the return to the land of Israel – does Rabbi Mendel's request get fulfilled)
 - Did this change evoke a different attitude to the land of Israel?

4. **A Land as a Home/ Berl Katznelson**
 - What is the definition of – 'home'?
 - What is the connection between a physical place and a land to identity? Do you feel such a connection?
 - Where does Israel, or specific locations within it build your identity?

5. **The Skill of the Land of Israel/ Dov Helman**
 - What does the experience of traveling through the land contribute to the connection with the land?



Chagim Center

Home for the holidays

- How does 'education by feet' have an impact? Why, according to the author, does this not suffice?
- What type of connection does the woman from Sepphoris have to the place? How is this attachment maintained while she's not physically present there?
- Do you share Helman's concern regarding your children's connection with the land? How are roots instilled?

6. This Path – is Our Soul. Closing reading passage.

Stresses the connection of the walking along the path to ethical and ideological contents and to a way of life.

If Only We Were in the Land of Israel...

At the feast of the fruits of the Land of Israel on the fifteenth of Shevat, Rabbi Mendel of Kotzk asked his disciple Rabbi Yitzchak Meir to discuss current affairs. Rabbi Yitzchak Meir opened his narrative with the question of the Gemara on Rosh Hashana for the Trees. He asked questions and provided answers, came up with contradictions and resolved them. Rabbi Mendel told him: If only we were in the Land of Israel.

It would be enough to go out into the fields and watch the trees in order to comprehend the significance of Rosh Hashana of the Trees in its literal sense.

"The Skill of the Land of Israel" - That's what I've been living with painfully for forty years. And for that I come to say something. [...] That I became a member of the "Camps of the Immigrants" movement. I also began to struggle with question of the Land of Israel.

In those days you could see the Old City of Jerusalem only from the ruined Notre Dame and look at the Arnon with binoculars, and I had been in Shiloh thirteen years later. The awareness of the Land of Israel of the days of my youth was of a very much divided country, blocked at its borders. Then - came the big trips, with the great educators. It was on these trips that I learned the meaning "following you, enchanted", and I also learned that the Land of Israel, is not only owned by feet alone. Such had occurred when I tied myself to the strip of barren land we had walked over, and ever since, nothing I achieved came easily. When I currently roam around the Kibbutzes, in which the question of personal security is the issue, I recall an experience of walking over there, to a corner of the Land of Israel, in order to sit there. The experience consisted of: To go to a place that never had, and probably never be secure to live in, and the only thing capable of being done is to hold on to the land stubbornly, while endangering one's life.

I recall that in the Lebanese war, at the entrance to Sidon, an Arab woman about forty years old stopped the jeep we were in and asked for a lift. As we took her in and asked her: Where are you from? She said, "from Sepphoris". We asked her, "How does Sepphoris look?" – She then described in detail every stone



and tree, though she had never visited Sepphoris. All she knew was from what was related at her home out of engraved memories that do not get erased, and the sense of being attached to the land.

Compared to her, although we have been living in the land for forty years, to us it still lacks the sense of belonging, we are not part of it, and too easily do we pack our bags and move to a different place, to a different land. A nation of the world, a nation that wanders. Roots did not take hold, and this is what concerns me.

Dovi Helman

This Path – is our Soul

The camp we put up, the trip that burst forward and arrived at the northern borders, to the mountains of Naftali, our feet that tread in Gilad; we lie, hit by the afternoon sunlight in a cave of a fuming and alienating rock in the wilderness of the Dead Sea, as we walked appallingly, thirstily in the Judean valley, our joyous ascent on the swift trails of the Galilee Mountains and we breathed the air of the Hermon peak, the feeling that invigorated us at the sight of the land as it stands firmly throughout generations – as part of it is cultivated and most of it – arid, is a land that is not cleared of stones, and stony mountains, its wellsprings blocked and dried out and spurts of water stream aimlessly. The feeling at the sight of the land's hidden resources and the opportunities of life in it – a dwelling place for hoards of the people of Israel from the Diaspora through work and settlement – all these were poured in our souls for years, dripping drop by drop, mixed with earth from this land, and shall become a philosophy and way of life to be taught, at our movement in the land. And we emphasize: Our feet have only conquered a path upon fields. Only this. But this path is our soul. In this covenant – we have become sanctified – brother, sister

From the introduction to – 'In your Covenant', Periodical of 'The Camps of Immigrants', 1937, Binyamin Gilad

For the multitudes that come to us... or those born here – this beach has not yet become a home. Our educational role is to turn this land for them this land and the spiritual world that created it to a home that the soul is attached to and glued to.

Berl Katznelson