



ההסתדרות הציונית העולמית  
World Zionist Organization  
המחלקה לפעילות בתפוצות  
Department for Diaspora Activities

# Beit Ha'am

Z-Talks

**בית העם**

שיג ושיח ציוני

**YITZHAK RABIN**  
THE MAN THAT  
WAS THERE

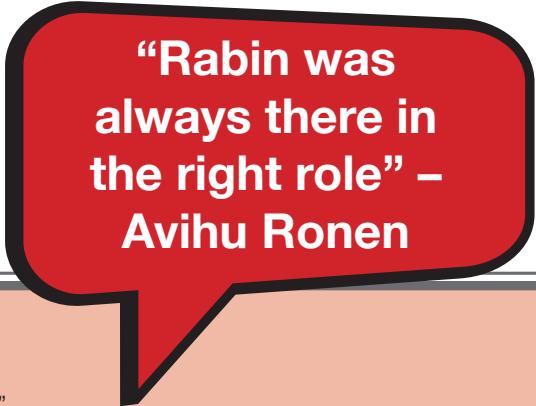


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**“Rabin was  
always there in  
the right role” –  
Avihu Ronen**

Why do we live in Israel? Is it because we have no other land?  
Or is it the actualization of the Zionist vision? Or is it anti-Semitism?  
Some who live in the Diaspora would say, “Zionism, over the years,  
has become an embarrassing word, and the State of Israel - a burden.”

In his speech in London, on July 6, 1886, Binyamin Ze'ev Herzl said, “The Jews want their own state where they can finally live and thrive as free people.” He concluded his speech with the hope that someday the State will carry forth the honor and happiness of the Jewish people....

The Jewish State was established: a modern state, with many achievements, yet still struggling for its existence. Does it fulfill Herzl's vision? Does it, in fact, carry the honor and happiness of Jews in Israel and abroad?

Is it really the Jewish “Beit Ha'am” (Home of the People) and if so, how?

The “Beit Ha'am” program was developed by the World Zionist Organization Department for Diaspora Activities, with the intention of encouraging dialogue about the meaning of Zionism in the 21st century, the question whether the Zionist vision has been accomplished, the role of the State of Israel towards those who live abroad, and what the shared vision is.

By using diverse contents, including traditional and modern texts, movie clips, works of art, games, etc. we wish to promote a vibrant, critical, and relevant discussion concerning elements of Zionist identity in the 21st century.

We invite you to discuss the meaning of political independence for the people living in Zion, and the reciprocal relationship between Jews who live in Israel and those who live in the Diaspora.

This is an opportunity for everyone, independent of prior knowledge, to learn, think, discuss, contemplate, and become familiar with what Zionism means to him or her.

The “Beit Ha'am” program currently exists in Hebrew, English, Spanish, and Portuguese, and will be translated into other languages by request. Our staff will be happy to receive comments and ideas that may help us continue to develop further tools to enhance the Zionist narrative.

We wish you a meaningful experience, Gusti Yehoshua Braverman

# THE MAN THAT WAS THERE

## ACTIVITY FOR THE YITZHAK RABIN MEMORIAL DAY

### THE MAN THAT WAS THERE – Dr. Avihu Ronen

“Rabin was just there. He was at the places that history took place. Our very own history, the one we experienced, the one we carry with us. The one that we live, the one we cope with as a present memory, painful or loved. Every place that something important happened, in the past fifty years in this country, Rabin was there. At times on the sidelines, at times in the center, at times in a supporting role, and at times as the leading actor. But as it turns out, in the eyes of the near-past historian, and in my opinion, as it will become clear to the future historians – Rabin was always there in the right role.”

#### ***“The man that was there”***

Words in Memory of Rabin on the day marking his assassination, 1996

### ACTIVITY GOALS

1. The participants will be acquainted with the life and work of Yitzhak Rabin.
2. The participants will learn about Rabin's life through the choices he made to always be in a place where he can influence, contribute and take responsibility for the country and its people
3. The participants will see Rabin's choice as exemplary leadership and will choose to adopt and apply this model of leadership on their life and community.
4. The participants will be exposed to Yitzhak Rabin's vision for the Israeli society through excerpts from his speeches throughout the years: a just society, a moral and principle based army, service orientated leadership, peace driven and taking responsibility.
5. The participants will understand that in order to be a leader they must shape a clear vision for their community.
6. The participants will be exposed to the dilemmas Israel faces and will relate them to their own life.



**DURATION:** 45 minutes

**ACCESSORIES:**

Rabin's life story Appendix – one copy for each participant

Rabin and Friends – one copy

“My Father's House” excerpt – one copy for each participant

Flashcards presenting Rabin's vision along with points for thought (prepare copies of the flashcards for a third of the class)

**ACTIVITY:**

**Part A – Opening (10 minutes)**

**Say:** In this activity we will engage in the different time marks in Yitzhak Rabin's life, as well as the dilemmas he was forced to face. We will try to understand what his leadership was composed of, and how his life and death have shaped the state of Israel, the Jewish community and our life.

**Part B – Childhood (10 minutes)**

**Say:** From a very young age, Yitzhak Rabin chose to weave his personal life with that of the nation's. He chose to study at the “Kaduri” agricultural school in order to acquire the tools necessary for agricultural development and settlement in Israel. His dream was to be a water engineer as an answer for the present need in the field in the arid Israel. In 1940 Rabin graduated from Kaduri as an outstanding student. His principle approached him with an interesting offer:



**Ask:**

**What is the connection between Yitzhak Rabin's personal life and the history of the State of Israel?**

### **Choose participants to read and demonstrate the dilemma using roll play**

**Principle:** "Yitzhak, as you must be well aware; every year I can recommend one of our graduates to go study abroad with a British Mandate scholarship. As the outstanding student of your class, I have decided to recommend you – and the request has been accepted. You have been approved to study 4 years at the University of California, Berkeley, whichever degree you choose. What do you say?"

**Facilitator:** Yitzhak, what do you say? Will you go for it?

**Rabin:** "Good question... I don't really know what to do – A world war has just broken out between the German's and the Allied forces... Most of my classmates are going to build a new settlement, to fortify our borders, and to join the "Ha'gana" organization, so that if the Germans arrive here we'll be able to defend our land... On the other hand – this is a once in a lifetime opportunity to study what I've always wanted – a subject that I can't study in Israel right now..."

**Facilitator:** Let's see what our friends here think

**Friend A:** "Yitzhak, you have to go for it. You won't have another opportunity like this. You'll be able to choose a degree which will greatly contribute to the building of the State. You'll study for four years, and then you'll join us on the Kibbutz."

**Friend B:** "It's true that getting a degree is important, but right now there is something more important. Who can tell how the war will end, we need everyone. You can always learn afterwards."

**Friend C:** "I say – There is no way you are going abroad now. If you want to study instead of training, then study a different subject in a university in the county, different maybe, Biology or Agriculture. The most important thing is that you stay close by."



**Ask the group:**

**Say:** Rabin chose to postpone his studies, and established a Kibbutz with his friends. In this choice Rabin had defined himself as a responsible, caring person who fashions his life according to the needs of the society.

What do you think Rabin should do?

**Part C – “The Man that was There” (10 minutes)**

**Say:** Let's look at the timeline again.

**Ask:**

What motivated Rabin to be in all these different places?

Why did he do all this? Did he “sacrifice” himself for the country? Did he want to advance, succeed? Or something else?



**Say:** We can find an answer to this question in Rabin's autobiography written in 1974, "Beit Avi" ("My Father's House")

"I think that what I learned at home above all is the willingness to do what is needed, without asking questions: without searching for the personal gain, but with personal identification with the issue. It sounds bombastic, but I think it's the truth that I lived, that I saw before me, that had an expression in my day to day life in my house, and it's one of the main things that made me what I am. The second thing that I learned at home was, in my opinion, great things don't happen by one person, they are not the genius of one man; they have to be the result of a collaboration between many people, a joint effort to bring a big group of people to a common approach, common denominator, a willingness to cooperate. This, I think, determined my course of action. The third thing is, see less of the personal gain. Obviously no person is without personal considerations, but we can always strive to subjugate our personal considerations to the general cause, without forgetting or confusing the fact that there is something bigger than yourself."

*(Beit Avi, Page 57)*

**Ask:**

**What do you think of this approach?**

**Are there things that are "bigger than yourself" that you also feel empathy towards? Like what? (If there is difficulty answering this, you can raise subjects such as volunteering, political involvement, social struggle)**

**What's difficult with this kind of commitment?**



## Part D – Rabin’s vision for the Israeli Society (15 minutes)

**Divide the group into 3.** Give each group a card which includes a part of Rabin’s speech along with related questions and instruct them to read and respond.

If there’s extra time, ask each group to create a visual piece to express Rabin’s vision as reflected in his speech.

**Did Rabin execute his vision, and has he applied it according to modern life in Israel?**

**Ask:**

**What was Rabin’s vision? From what you know, did he realize this vision? Is this today’s reality in Israel? What is your vision for the Israeli society? What do you need to do in order to promote this vision? Now that you are familiar with Yitzhak Rabin’s choices and actions throughout his life, what do you take from Yitzhak Rabin’s leadership and vision to your personal life and your community life?**

## Part E – Conclusion

**Say:** The values upon which Yitzhak Rabin’s vision is based – ethics, the value of human life, social justice, leadership and reasonability are the values on which the State of Israel was based upon and has prospered in the last 60 years. In our opinion, the constant existence of the State of Israel is reliant on the continued implementation of these values, which will also have a direct impact on the Jewish people around the world. Leadership is the choice to work towards your vision and taking responsibility for your actions. The choice to be in the right place at the right time was Rabin’s choice, which made him a significant leader in the life of the state and the people of Israel. Today we are in need of more people who will choose this path in Israel and in the entire Jewish world.



## Appendix A – Yitzhak Rabin’s Life Story

<b>Year</b>	<b>Rabin’s Life</b>	<b>The Jewish settlement in Israel/The State of Israel</b>
1937-1940	A student at the “Kaduri” Agricultural School in Kfar Tavor.	“The 5696-5699 events (1936-39) – violent clashes between Arabs and Jews in Palestine
1940	Joins the founders of Ramat Yochanan Kibbutz	World War II
1941-1945	Enlists in the “Palmach” and takes on commanding roles	Holocaust
1945-1948	Appointed Deputy Commander of the first “Palmach” battalion. Leads the operation to break into the Atlit “illelgal’ immigrant detention camp.	Ha’Apala – illegal immigration of tens of thousands of Jewish refugees from Europe and Eastern countries to Israel
1948	Appointed Commander of the “Harel” brigade and commands over the battles to free Jerusalem during the War of Independence	The War of Independence  The establishment of the State of Israel
1964-1968	Chief of General Staff in the Israeli Defense Force	The Six Day War 1967 – During which Israel overcame all of the Arab nations armies and captured the Golan Heights, Judea & Samaria, Sinai and The Gaza Strip
1968-1973	Israeli Ambassador in Washington, DC.	Strengthening of Israel-USA ties The Yom Kippur War



<b>Year</b>	<b>Rabin's Life</b>	<b>The Jewish settlement in Israel/The State of Israel</b>
January 1974	Elected to the Knesset on behalf of the Labor party, appointed Minister for labor and welfare	
June 1974	Elected Labor Party Chairman and appointed Prime Minister	
1974-1977	Rabin is elected the fifth Prime Minister of Israel	First diplomatic contacts with Egypt with mediation by Kissinger
1977	In response to a media exposure on a dollar bank account that his wife, Leah, had while they lived in the US (which was illegal at they time by law) – Rabin decides not to run for Prime Minister in the 1977 elections	
1977-1984	Knesset Member	«The 77 Revolution» – The Likkud chaired by Menachem Begin gain power. 1982 – First Lebanon War
1984-1990	Defense Minister in the coalition government lead by Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Shamir	1988 – The First Intifada – Violent struggle by the Palestinians in the occupied territories against the Israeli occupation
1992	Chairman of the Labor Party and chosen as Prime Minister for the second time.	



<b>Year</b>	<b>Rabin's Life</b>	<b>The Jewish settlement in Israel/The State of Israel</b>
1993		Interim Peace agreement with the Palestinians, the establishment of the Palestinian Authority
1994		Signing of the Peace agreement between Israel and Jordan
1994	Rabin is awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace	
November 4, 1995	Assassinated during a Peace rally "Yes for Peace, No to violence" in Tel Aviv.	



# QUOTES APPENDIX

## 1. The Peace Process and its affects on society

*Mr. Chairman,  
Members of the Knesset,*

*The Peace agreement that is proposed for approval today is a balanced document, which each side can view it as answering its main demands, and that is how it should be. Only peace that both sides are happy with its foundations is a sustainable peace. In this peace there are no losers. In this peace we all win.*

*A peace agreement doesn't mean a political agreement alone, but a fundamental change in our very existence here – no longer “a people that shall dwell alone”.*

*This is a deep and fundamental change, a change that will affect every walk of life: from the truck that will depart Haifa and on it cargo to Amman, to a plane taking off from Sde-Dov airfield and landing thirty minutes later by the Royal Hashemite Palace. Businessmen fly out in the morning to close a deal and return to Jerusalem by evening, and families that will venture out with their children to Petra, three hours ride from Tel Aviv. This change will affect each and every one of us in our daily lives.*

*Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's speech to the Knesset the eve of the Peace agreement signing with Jordan October 25, 1944.*

**What is important in the peace process according to Rabin's speech?**

**According to the speech, how does the peace agreement affect society, the state?**

**What is the leadership image that is portrayed in this speech?**



## 2. The Image of Leadership

*“Our decision to place the citizen at the top of our worries is firm. I ask all of us, all those dwelling in this house remember – The people don’t serve us – we serve the people.”*

Yitzhak Rabin, Speech at the Knesset during the swearing-in of the Government July 13, 1992.

**What is the principle upon which the leadership should act according to Yitzhak Rabin?**

**What does the leadership look like in your country?**

**What does the leadership look like in your Jewish community?**

## 3. The Social list of priorities

*“Security isn’t just a tank, a plane and a Missile boat. Security is also, and maybe foremost – the person, the Israeli citizen. Security is the person’s education, his home, his school, his street and his neighborhood, the society in which he was raised, and security is mankind’s hope. Security is the peace of mind and the means of living of the immigrant from Leningrad, the roof over the head of an immigrant from Gondar, Ethiopia, it’s the factory and employment for each of the people living in this country, to the discharged soldier, it’s the integration in our way of life and culture. That’s also security.”*

Yitzhak Rabin, Speech at the Knesset during the swearing-in of the Government July 13, 1992.

**What are the things that the existence of the state is dependent on, according to Rabin’s perception?**

**What is in the center of the society, what is its purpose?**

**How is this outlook different from other leader’s outlooks you know?**

