



# Beit Ha'am

## Z-Talks

### Purim from a Zionist-feminine perspective

(Book of Esther 1:9-22)

9 Also Vashti the queen made a feast for the women in the royal house which belonged to king Ahasuerus. 10 On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded... ..the seven chamberlains that ministered in the presence of Ahasuerus the king, 11 to bring Vashti the queen before the king with the crown royal, to show the peoples and the princes her beauty; for she was fair to look on. 12 But the queen Vashti refused to come at the king's commandment by the chamberlains; therefore was the king very wroth, and his anger burned in him.

13 Then the king said to the wise men, who knew the times--for so was the king's manner toward all that knew law and judgment; 14 and the next unto him was Carshena... ..the seven princes of Persia and Media, who saw the king's face, and sat the first in the kingdom: 15 'What shall we do unto the queen Vashti according to law, forasmuch as she hath not done the bidding of the king Ahasuerus by the chamberlains?' 16 And Memucan answered before the king and the princes: 'Vashti the queen hath not done wrong to the king only, but also to all the princes, and to all the peoples, that are in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus. 17 For this deed of the queen will come abroad unto all women, to make their husbands contemptible in their eyes, when it will be said: The king Ahasuerus commanded Vashti the queen to be brought in before him, but she came not. 18 And this day will the princesses of Persia and Media who have heard of the deed of the queen say the like unto all the king's princes. So will there arise enough contempt and wrath. 19 If it please the king, let there go forth a royal commandment from him, and let it be written among the laws of the Persians and the Medes, that it be not altered, that Vashti come no more before king Ahasuerus, and that the king give her royal estate unto another that is better than she... ..21 And the word pleased the king and the princes; and the king did according to the word of Memucan;

Vashti refuses to show up to the king's feast. Where do you think this decision came from? Do you view this as an act of Feminism? Vashti holds her own "women only" feast. Do you find her action feminist or not? Why are the king and his servants worried that Vashti's rebellious actions will subsequently have major influence on women all over the kingdom? Can this tell us something about Vashti's power and leadership skills? If this kind of event took place today, what influence would it have? What would it say about us (as a society)?



Book of Esther 4:15-5:8

15 Then Esther bade them return answer unto Mordecai: 16 ... and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish.' 17 So Mordecai went his way, and did according to all that Esther had commanded him. (5) 1 Now it came to pass on the third day, that Esther put on her royal apparel, and stood in the inner court of the king's house, over against the king's house; and the king sat upon his royal throne in the royal house, over against the entrance of the house. 2 And it was so, when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, that she obtained favour in his sight; and the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that was in his hand.

So Esther drew near, and touched the top of the sceptre. 3 Then said the king unto her: 'What wilt thou, queen Esther? for whatever thy request, even to the half of the kingdom, it shall be given thee.' 4 And Esther said: 'If it seem good unto the king, let the king and Haman come this day unto the banquet that I have prepared for him.' 5 Then the king said: 'Cause Haman to make haste, that it may be done as Esther hath said.' So the king and Haman came to the banquet that Esther had prepared. 6 And the king said unto Esther at the banquet of wine: 'Whatever thy petition, it shall be granted thee; and whatever thy request, even to the half of the kingdom, it shall be performed.' 7 Then answered Esther, and said: 'My petition and my request is--8 if I have found favour in the sight of the king, and if it please the king to grant my petition, and to perform my request--let the king and Haman come to the banquet that I shall prepare for them, and I will do to-morrow as the king hath said.'

- Eventually, Esther played a major role in the Megillah. Was this a result of her official position as the queen or specifically of her personality? Nowadays, do women also play an important role in shaping the Jewish-Zionist identity and connecting people to the State of Israel? If so, What is this role?
- Can you see a difference in Vashti and Esther's actions and approaches? To which one of them do you better relate? Which approach expresses better leadership in your opinion?
- Did Vashti and Esther behave in a "feminine" manner? Why? Can we still talk, in the 21st century, about "feminine"/"masculine" behavior?
- Can you recall a time in your life when you chose to act like Esther or Vashti? If so, why did you act this way?



# Young Israeli Women Fulfilling Zionism

## Lucy Aharish

born in 1981. Is an Israeli-Arab news presenter and journalist. Aharish was one of the 12 people to light the torch in the traditional annual ceremony of Yom Haatzmaut, the 67th Independence Day of the State of Israel. In its reasons for the choice, the ceremony committee wrote: "Aharish was chosen because she represents and promotes social pluralism and calls for co-existence in our country." Aharish proudly carries her Arab roots in one hand, and her love and affiliation with the State of Israel, in the other. She is the embodiment of coexistence; working to bring together all citizens of Israel, both Jewish and Arab.

Because of Her strong opinions, activism, colorful personality, liveliness, and charisma, Aharish has managed to position herself as a young Israeli that is willing to fight bravely for her values, and her desire to make Israeli society tolerant, enlightened and more pluralistic.



Lucy Aharish profile (6 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R79Lv5tpBOA>

## Adi Keisar

born in 1980. Is an Israeli Mizrachi (Mizrachi = Sephardic Jew, descended from Muslim countries) poet who has developed a unique genre of protest poetry. She deals with issues of oppression and liberation of women and the Mizrachi community, both as underrepresented communities. Keisar was one of the founders of the "Ars-poetica" genre, which is one of the most interesting social and cultural events in Israel in the recent years. The evenings include a "hafila" (big party), young Mizrachi poets reading their poems and belly-dancers.

Being a young Mizrachi woman, Keisar writes about the discrimination of ethnic groups in Israel, and centers of power in Israeli society. She bravely examines sensitive issues in Israel's culture with confidence, and sounds a voice that is loud and clear.



Adi keisar reads one of her poems (1 min.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jRajmKL-cHU>



Sigalit banai (from the Ars-poetica group) read a poem (2 min.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jqXs2SVd3D0>

## Dr. Kira Radinski

born in 1986, is an expert in the field of Computer Science at the Technion. According to The Journal of Technology at MIT University, Radinski is one of 35 promising young innovators around the world. Dr. Radinski has developed a methodology using a computerized system to predict future events based on the analysis of years of old texts. She uses hundreds of years of text from sources such as The New York Times and Encyclopedias, that are constantly updated. The system detects patterns of events and patterns of cause, in which it can predict recurrent events such as natural disasters, epidemics, and waves of violence. According to Radinski, she has devoted herself to scientific research since age 15 at the Technion, with one dream in mind - to make the world a better place!



Kira Radinski tells about herself and the enterprise she has developed (4.5 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z-Rn7JFhXpw>

## IDF female soldiers volunteer for combat service in the battalion "Karakal"

"Karakal" battalion is the first battalion that fully combines military fighters, men and women. It was established in 2000 in order to incorporate women in Combat units. Most of its operational activities is carried out in the southern region and includes ambushes, patrols, chases, observations, settlements security and security activities to prevent terrorist infiltration. Chen Rinat, one of the first soldiers in "karakal" said: "I decided that if I am able to be a fighter, defend the country and serve in a combined battalion then I should do it!... We realized we were one of the first groups, this is something big and exciting and we were proud to be part of it."



About Karakal battalion and the combat woman soldiers (3.5 minutes)-

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W4RR\\_UB2HP4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W4RR_UB2HP4)

- Who, among the women above, inspires you and why?
- Who, in your opinion, among the women above, represents in her actions Zionist values? Why?
- Do you find anything unique/different in women's social/Zionist actions?
- What can we learn about the Israeli society from the stories of the women here?
- In your point of view, do women have a different Zionist role than men? What is it?

### Two additional women:



**Pascal Berkovich:** (born 1967) is an Olympic paralyzed player, lecturer and Israeli author.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XTnCWREftF4>



**Sivan Yaari:** Young Israeli entrepreneur that brought water and electricity to distant rural villages in Africa.

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=-pFa9DY36\\_A](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-pFa9DY36_A)