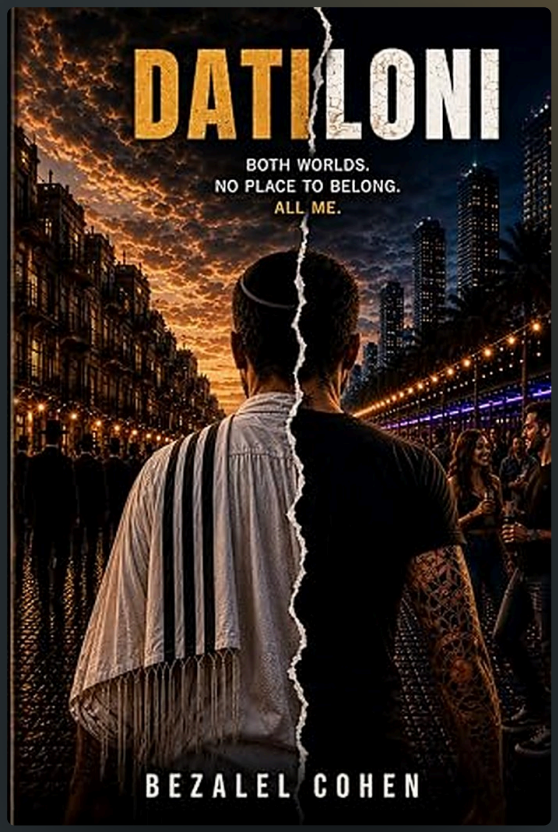
BezBooks



Book Club Guide

Datiloni

Not between religious and secular. Between who I was and who I choose to be.

by Bezalel Cohen

About the book

Datiloni is Bezalel Cohen's personal story: growing up in the ultra-Orthodox world, the questions that started quietly and grew louder over the years, and the moment he realized he had to go out and find the answers himself.

It's a book about the road between two worlds, about the loves, successes and falls along the way, and about the price and the gift of choosing who you are. It doesn't judge either side; it tries to understand.

Questions for discussion

1. The book opens with the smells of home: ink, parchment, black coffee and Friday couscous. Which smell or sensory memory takes you back to the home you grew up in?
2. Even before questions of faith, the boy in the book asks himself, "Am I okay?" Why do you think the question of self-worth came before the question of religion?
3. The constant comparison to his twin brother shapes his childhood. How do comparisons shape our identity, and when do they stop affecting us?
4. "Not because we were bad kids, but because we were hungry kids." What was that hunger for, and how do you recognize it in children, or in yourself?
5. During his double life, the kippah comes off just before he steps off the bus. Have you ever lived "two versions" of yourself? What did it do to you?
6. In Tel Aviv he gets all the freedom he wanted, and that's exactly when emptiness arrives. Why do you think that is?
7. His mentor shows him that courage isn't the absence of fear. Which decision in your life was made out of fear, and which out of courage?
8. "What if life isn't a journey of finding yourself, but a journey of building yourself?" Do you agree?
9. "Maybe real freedom begins the moment it no longer matters what they said." Can rebellion be a kind of dependence?
10. The book doesn't judge either side. Did it change anything in how you see the ultra-Orthodox world, or those who leave it?
11. At the end of the road he speaks of building a bridge rather than choosing a side. What does that mean for you, in a family or in society?
12. What would you take with you "in the suitcase" from the home you grew up in, and what would you leave behind?

Quotes to talk about

> You can leave a place. You can't leave yourself.

> Sometimes a person stays in a place for years after he has already left it.

> What if life isn't a journey of finding yourself, but a journey of building yourself?

> A place where you can love your roots without being buried under them, and spread your wings without forgetting where you learned to fly.

> The greatest courage isn't leaving one world for another. The greatest courage is building a path of your own.

About the author

Bezalel Cohen is an Israeli author who writes about the things that are hard to say out loud: identity, belonging and love. He writes in the first person, without masks, with a lot of honesty and a little humor. Datiloni and What Happened to Love? are available on Amazon in English and Hebrew.

How to use this guide

- You don't need to answer every question. Pick the 4–5 that speak to you.
- Try opening the meeting by reading one of the quotes out loud.
- Taking a photo of your meeting? Tag me on Instagram @bezcohen, I'd love to see it.

Details and buying

bezalelcohen.com/en/datiloni