

STORIES FROM HUMANS OF ISRAEL EXHIBIT



GIDON LEV

"As a Holocaust survivor who is 88 years-young, these times in Israel are horrific. I was born in 1935. When I was only three years old, my family fled from our home in Karlovy Vary, in the former Czechoslovakia, to Prague, where we lived as refugees for three years before we were sent to Theresienstadt.

I know what it feels like to flee in fear. I know what it feels like to feel powerless. For the past few days, I have been in a small kibbutz in the desert to try to stay safe from the rockets. Never in my lifetime would I believe I could be a refugee again. And this, in my own country!

In my opinion, what took place here in Israel on October 7th was a total return to the savage behavior of the Nazis and, in some instances, even worse! I understand that these Hamas terrorists sent pictures to the victim's families from their own phones! I personally have a hard time accepting that such human beings actually exist.

Many people are comparing what happened on October 7th to the Holocaust because it's the worst single attack on Jews since then. But there is a difference today and not a good one:

In the 1930s and even in the 1940s not enough people spoke out for the Jews because they were brainwashed to not care about them and did not believe that a genocide was planned.

Today, there is no excuse, we all know what happened in the Holocaust. Yet many non-Jews around the world are supporting Hamas. Some of them are the same people that before this time, would say #neveragain and yet now they are not standing with us. I ask you, what is their excuse?



**HAIM RAANAN, HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR, KIBBUTZ BE'ERI,
SURVIVOR OF THE 7TH OF OCTOBER MASSACRE.**

(In the black-and-white picture you can see Haim and his mother Erin)

"I never thought that as a Holocaust survivor, I would need to hide for my life again. I was born in Budapest, Hungary in 1935 and was the only child of my family. When the violence and hatred mounted in Hungary against Jews, we were forced to wear the notorious yellow badge and our house was marked with the Star of David as a means to mark us as Jews. It was done in order to isolate, dehumanize, terrorize, and isolate us from the entire society.

I was shocked to see that eight decades after the Holocaust the Star of David symbol has been painted once again on Jewish homes all across Europe to target and frighten them amid the

devastating October 7 massacre. It echoes the antisemitic persecution I suffered as a child. I never imagined that something like this could ever happen again in Europe...

On the morning of the 7th of October, I heard constant sirens wailing in my Kibbutz. I thought it was just another barrage of rockets from Gaza which we were already accustomed to.

No one could have imagined the carnage that was taking place. We started to get text messages that Hamas terrorists were all over the kibbutz and that they were trying to break into the safe rooms where people were hiding. Hamas terrorists set fire to a lot of homes in order to force their occupants to come out but many preferred to die in the fires rather than be killed by the terrorists.

The massacre wiped out about 10% of the kibbutz's 1,000 residents. More than 100 residents of the Kibbutz were either murdered or kidnaped and taken to Gaza that day.

For me, it was a second Holocaust.

During the Holocaust, I didn't know personally the 6,000,000 who perished but, in the Kibbutz Be'eri massacre,

I knew almost every single person who was murdered that day."



HAIM JELIN, KIBBUTZ BE'ERI, SURVIVOR OF THE 7TH OF OCTOBER MASSACRE.

"After the massacre, people asked me:

'How are you doing'?

I replied: 'alive'.

For the first month, that was my sole answer to every person who asked me that question.

I still don't know how the Be'eri community will be able to process and internalize what we have gone through.

The horrors, the loss of lives, the hostages, the feeling of being so helpless.

For seven hours there was no one except the emergency response team to protect the children, the adults, the babies, and the families who were slaughtered and burned. This was a holocaust, right outside our doorstep. When the IDF soldiers arrived at about 3 p.m., the Arabic was replaced by Hebrew, and this gave us some hope that there was a chance to get out of this alive.

The stories are piling up and the silence is deafening.

All you can do is hug and cry, The heroic stories of mothers who fought like lionesses, the bravery of soldiers who reside in Be'eri, who rushed to save the kibbutz, as well as the bravery

of the kibbutz alert squad, and above all the mobile phones found in every safe room, that revealed the full story of what was happening to families until their last breath is evidence of the Holocaust that took place in these communities.

We will remember and never forget.

People are asking me If I will ever go back to Be'eri.

Be'eri is my home, I don't have any other place to go to.

You can destroy houses, destroy infrastructure, but you cannot kill our spirit.

We will rebuild our society. We will be a light for the State of Israel and the whole world but in order to do so we have to feel safe again. There should be No more rockets, No more safe rooms, and NO more terrorism from the Gaza Strip. Then, we can come back and make our community bloom again."



DOV MORAN, INVENTOR OF THE USB MEMORY STICK

"During an important business trip to New York in 1998, my computer crashed and I found myself without a presentation and with 200 people staring at me. I promised myself that was the last time such a thing happens to me, and how great it would have been if I could take the presentation in my pocket. Many people said the idea of a Disk-on-Key wouldn't work and thought I'm daydreaming, but I believed in it.

A lot of people don't follow their dreams and ideas because the surroundings discourage them. remember, that without persistence and a huge amount of resilience, your ideas will stay on the drawing board."



RAFI MEHUDAR, ISRAEL'S DRIP IRRIGATION PIONEER

"The best thing ever that happened to the State of Israel is the fact that we didn't have anything in abundance--water or petrol. We had to use the 'Jewish brain', thinking outside the box to find a solution for our survival. That's the D.N.A of our #startupnation. When I started working with Netafim, it was me and three other employees; today the company has over 4,000 employees in 150 countries around the world. I'm proud to say that Israeli innovation is helping to feed nearly a billion people per year.

If you will look back in history, you will see that wars broke out over resources such as land and water. I'm happy to say that my Inventions are saving Human lives around the world as we speak. My inventions save the world tens of billions of gallons of water a year (cutting down on water use by up to 90%) and significantly increase the level of food supply per acre.

My inventions not only save gallons of water but actually save gallons of blood from being spilled over unnecessary wars on resources. It's Peacekeeping at its Best."



SAM

"I'm two weeks in Israel and I'm already enrolled in Ulpan. The most difficult thing in learning Hebrew is the ability to pronounce words correctly.

I feel like a camel, as everything with a 'n (Chet) makes you want to spit. The ability to speak in Hebrew stretches your vocal cords in a way that I never thought was possible. There's a full range of different ways to pronounce Chet. Sometimes you can't really tell the difference between a Chet and a Hey (ה), but other times the Chet sound sort of hits you and you think, "Shit, how did they do that?"

Sometimes, instead of feeling down about your knowledge of the language, you start to feel angry. Coming from America and speaking English, there isn't really any other language you need to know. On the other hand, only ten million people speak Hebrew, which is why most people here speak at least some English. So you think to yourself, 'I'm busting my ass trying to learn this language that I'll never be able to use anywhere else -- why?' But then you go back to miserably studying in an attempt to get your Hebrew to at least an elementary school level."



RAFI

“I was born to an Ultra-orthodox family and I’m the oldest of 11 brothers and sisters. At the age of 14 I came back home with an earring and colored hair which caused my mother to faint. In about a week I rented my own place and never looked back.

The first time I came to Tel Aviv I remember telling myself:

‘A MECHAYEH!’

People kissing in the street, and shops open on Saturday. I felt a sense of freedom that can only be described as Marc Renton said in Trainspotting: ‘Take the best sensation you ever had...multiply it by a thousand, and you’re still nowhere near it.’ That is how much I love Tel Aviv.

***The Graffiti in Hebrew means:**

If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, It’s because of Tel Aviv.



ZIV SHILON

“In my last hours of service as a company commander in Givati Brigade - a combat unit of the Israeli Defense Forces, I was severely wounded during an operational mission on the Gaza Strip.

On October 2012, I arrived to the Gaza gate to open it and allow IDF forces to return to Israeli ground. As I opened the gate a massive explosion occurred – a bomb planted by terrorists was triggered. Severely injured, I realized that I lost both of my hands yet I continued to operate and directed my soldiers to safely completing the mission.

When I woke up at the hospital two weeks after the incident, I came to the realization that my life was forever changed.

In the course of two years I had undergone over 17 surgeries and intensive rehabilitation. Due to my immense motivation and power of will I succeeded to rise above physical hurdles including those I thought were impossible.

I completed 5 Marathons and the Iron Man competition.

My life course taught me that we have inner powers within us. If will use them, we will be able to overcome great obstacles.”



DANNY

"The entire population of Israel is living with post-traumatic stress disorder because the entire Jewish history is soaked with the blood of Jews who were persecuted because of their religion. Just take the last century: a holocaust that caused more than a third of the Jewish people to vanish, seven wars in which thousands of Israelis died on the battlefield to defend the Jewish state, endless terrorist attacks in which thousands of Israelis perished, and the knowledge that the next war is just over the horizon. It's like the whole country needs to go to a shrink in order to fix their existential anxiety.

You feel like you're on the Titanic and that you have limited time before you hit the iceberg, so you have to make the best of it while you can. This is the reason why Tel Avivians party so hard and why we live in a non-stop environment. It's like an intense video game that you can't stop -- which means you're like Super Mario on acid. It's part of the Israeli DNA in which we push it to the edge. It's a start-up nation where you push the peddle to the ground but, at the same time, you might experience road rage like you never seen before. Welcome to Israel."



Yael

"Former War Correspondent. Covered; Belgrade revolution, Afghanistan, Iraq war, Second Intifada, Operation Cast Lead, The Second Lebanon War, Haiti earthquake, Tahrir Square and the Arab Spring, and then some over the course of the last 20 years...quit the field after Tahrir as I realized every bullet has an address and it eventually finds you..."

Currently hosting a morning show behind a desk in an air-conditioned studio in Jaffa, Tel Aviv.

Scariest moment in life: Having a Katusha fall 7 meters away from myself and my team in Northern Israel at the height of the Second Lebanon War, 2006.

Most interesting moment: Arriving at Saddam Hussein's hideout hole in the ground in Tikrit, Iraq five hours after he was captured in 2003.

Best moment in life: Giving birth to my daughter Lia."



RONIA

"Did you ever hear about The Lost Tribes of Israel?"

Well, you're looking at one of its descendants.

I was born in Manipur (a state in northeastern India), and my family made Aliyah (immigration of Jews from the Diaspora to the Land of Israel) when I was a year old.

We're the lost descendants of the Tribe of Manasseh, who were exiled during the Babylonian captivity. We were "discovered" by Rabbi Eliyahu Avichail, who recognized our Jewish heritage, which includes: Brit milah (male circumcision), religious Holidays that are similar to those of Judaism, and similar religious practices.

I feel Jewish and I do feel part of this place, but sometimes you get the feeling that you need to prove your Judaism. Israel can be very "in your face," where total strangers will ask you direct, personal questions. I have been asked many times if I'm a foreign worker and what I do in Israel. I wish people would be more sensitive. I wasn't 'found' in order to feel lost."



ZEHAVA

"The truth is, I can't explain how I've gotten to be 100 years old. I'll just say that it's a blend of good genes and a quality of life that you just don't see any more nowadays. I've always been moderate and exact in life. I didn't need cigarettes. I didn't need drugs. I didn't need to get drunk. And I didn't need too much sugar.

Because of my moderate ways, I've managed to flourish for 100 years of constant shifts.

Shifts from the analog world, where everything functions in a sluggish manner- to the digital age, where everything moves at the speed of light. From a time where it would take more than two months for a letter to get to New York- I now live in a time where you can get a message to the other side of the world at the push of a button.

I'm surrounded by Facebook, Twitter, and this new thing called Snapchat- that I'll never understand the point of.

I miss the days when I'd wait two months for a letter from the love of my life. I feel like we've lost the passion, the innocence, and the intimacy of interpersonal communication.



RAFI EITAN, THE MAN WHO BROUGHT ADOLF EICHMANN TO JUSTICE

"Momentito senior," we called, Eichmann turned to us and we pounced him and took him to the getaway car. He let out a terrible yell, like a wild beast caught in a trap. In the car, he didn't stop wailing so we had to gag him. We knew that Eichmann had two scars: one on his stomach and the other on his wrist. When I managed to see that he had the scars in those exact locations, I knew that we had found Eichman.

I socked one of the agent's hands twice (that was the signal that we captured the right person), and we drove off.

I'm not an emotional person and I had hundreds of operations during my service in the Mossad, but at that moment in time when I realized that we captured Eichmann, was the most significant one for me. I knew that we were bringing justice to 6,000,000 Jews who were slain in the Holocaust. **It's one of those rare moments when you can actually feel history being made.** Adolf Eichmann was sentenced to death. I was in the room moments before the hangman pulled the trigger. His last words were: 'I hope to see you all very quickly on the other side.'

I didn't wait for the actual hanging but I was near the cremation room when the fire consumes his body.

While his body was consumed by the fire, I felt that it was poetic justice. He was brought to justice by his body being burnt by a sovereign Jewish state."



BAR

"I left 'Mea Shearim' (an Ultra-Orthodox neighborhood in Jerusalem) six years ago and never looked back. I left that world because I felt there is a huge gap between what the Bible says and the way people interpret it. Instead of Love, I saw hate, discrimination, and violence, all in the name of God.

I left my tribe behind, but I realized that in the real world, you have different tribes as well: Secular, Vegan, Gay, etc..., and you will never be an individual if you keep dancing to the rhythm of the Tribal drum.

In the Ultra-Orthodox world, you need to have the correct Shtreimel, the right wig, and study at the right Yeshiva, while in the secular world, you need to have the newest iPhone, the coolest brands, and the nicest car.

In both worlds, everything is about worshipping something; the difference is only in what you worship. I try to stay away from this worldview and keep both my feet on solid ground."



LOUISE

"Speaking different languages is the most essential skill you can acquire in life. It's the key that will open every door. If you really want to communicate with the world, you have to speak its language, and that is the reason why I speak 17 of them. Even if you are speaking with a foe or an enemy, if you are speaking with him in his own language, you have already met him halfway. When you combine it with the right intonation and the right body language, you can speak on the same frequency. This is the reason why I think Arabic should be a mandatory language in the Israeli education system, and Hebrew in the Palestinian one. So many wars start because of miscommunication, so we should all do ourselves a favor and learn a new language. It might save our lives'."



AVRAHAM SINAI, THE RIGHTEOUS MAN FROM LEBANON

“I was born as a Shia Muslim in South Lebanon by the name of Ibrahim Yassin. During my previous life, Lebanon was the “playground” of the Middle East, much like Syria is today. I was harassed on daily basis by the Palestinian organizations that controlled the area I was living in because I was a Shia Muslim, so when the Israelis came I was happy because they restored order in my village.

I wanted to have a quiet village and a normal life that will be free from violence, so I decided to help provide the Israelis with Information about insurgent activity in my village — a decision that would come to change my life dramatically.

In 1985 I was kidnapped by Hezbollah and I was locked in an underground bunker for an entire year. Take your worst nightmare, multiply it by 1,000 and you still won’t get to where I was. I handled the beating, the starvation and the torture, but nothing could have prepared me for their heinous crime of burning my nine month-old baby son in front of my eyes. I felt that surely my life had come to an end.

After a year in the bunker they released me believing that I had become a true believer in Hezbollah’s cause. I knew from the moment I was released that I would fight back against this cruel organization. I was determined to rid my country of Hezbollah so we could be free, and so

no other child would ever be burned in front of his father's eyes again. I joined Hezbollah in order to destroy them from within.

I worked from within Hezbollah for 11 years, from 1986 until 1997, helping prevent many terrorist attacks. For security reasons, I cannot discuss my operations during that time but I can say that I saved many innocent lives on both sides of the border. The fact that we are even speaking right now is a pure MIRACLE.

After all these things I'd gone through in Lebanon, I'd reached the conclusion that the truth is in Judaism and decided to convert. There is a reason why Christianity and Islam emerged from it. It's the first Text Book for living a meaningful life. and so Ibrahim Yassin, the Shia Muslim from Southern Lebanon become Avraham Sinai, an ultra-Orthodox Jew from the holy city of Safed. God sure does work in mysterious ways."