



FROM SACRIFICE TO **SOVEREIGNTY**

A Family Guide to Experiencing
Israel's Most Powerful 48 Hours



PULSE OF ISRAEL

OPENING MESSAGE

This Is Not Just Memory. This Is Our Reality.

For over 2,000 years, we remembered loss.
We remembered exile. We remembered powerlessness. We remembered what it meant to live at the mercy of others.

But today, something has changed.

Today, the Jewish people live a reality no other nation has ever experienced.

Within just 24 hours, we move from the deepest pain, Israel Memorial Day, to the greatest celebration, Israel Independence Day.

From mourning our fallen...
to celebrating our miraculous independence.

This is not normal.
This is not natural.

This is the Jewish story, reborn in our lifetime.

Go through this guide together as a family for the most powerful 48 hours in the Jewish calendar.

YOM HAZIKARON

What are we remembering?

Yom HaZikaron, Israel's Memorial Day, is not just about remembering names lost to war and terror, it's about understanding what their sacrifice made possible.

It is about remembering what it takes for Jews to live freely in our homeland, the price of our freedom, the price of sovereignty in our ancestral homeland.

For generations, Jews had no army. No ability to defend themselves. No sovereignty.

And we paid the ultimate price.

On Holocaust Remembrance Day we are reminded the painful reminder of what happens when the Jewish people do not have a sovereign state of our own.

But Yom HaZikaron, Israel Memorial Day, is different.

Yom HaZikaron is the price we pay for the miracle of once again having a sovereign Jewish state of Israel.

Today, we have an army.
We have strength.
We have sovereignty.

And that reality exists because of those who gave everything.
They didn't just fall.
They chose to stand.
To fight.
To defend the Jewish people, so that we would never again be
helpless.
This is what we remember.
And this is what we must never take for granted.

Talk About It Together

- What does it mean that for over 2,000 years the Jewish people had no army and today we do?
- Why are people willing to risk their lives to defend Israel?
- What is motivating so many Jewish youth in Israel to serve in fighting units and show up to fight, despite the risks and dangers?
- At 18, many Jewish teenagers are choosing universities. Others are choosing what IDF units to join to defend their people. What creates that difference?
- Why are some Jewish youth from around the world moving to Israel to serve in the IDF as lone soldiers?
- What would the Jewish world look like today if we still couldn't defend ourselves?

STORIES

More Than Names: Real Lives

Since October 7th, it's become nearly impossible to find anyone in Israel who doesn't have one degree of separation from the fallen, soldiers or civilians. The pain is everywhere. In every conversation. In every home. It's all of us.

For me, it began with my friend from yeshiva, Yaron Chen HY"D. Yaron was kidnapped and murdered by jihadi terrorists in 1993. It was the first time that I knew someone personally.

Years later, it was my friend and fellow Golani soldier Dameon Klein HY"D, who was killed in a double terror attack that caught him as he was one of the first responders to treat those injured from the first blast.

Then it was my close childhood friend Ari Fuld HY"D. A lion of a man. A friend. A fighter. A voice for truth. A lion of Zion.

He, too, was murdered by a jihadi terrorist, a teenager. Convicted after two years of court cases and freed in one of the Gaza hostage deals, after only serving four years. Ari, too, murdered just for being a proud Jew living in our ancestral homeland.

Through Ari, I learned more about his close friend Yehoshua Friedberg HY"D, another young, idealistic IDF soldier kidnapped and murdered by terrorists the very same year as Yaron. I remember the tragic killing of Yehoshua as well, as I worked together with his fiancée at the time.

Every year on Israel's Memorial Day, I make a point to visit the graves of both Ari and Yehoshua on Mount Herzl. It's my way of keeping their memory alive. Ari had taken it upon himself to honor Yehoshua. Now that Ari is gone, I try my best to carry that mission for them both.

I found out a few years ago that my friend from Yeshiva, Yaron Chen HY"D, is buried only a few feet away from Yehoshua, so I also visit Yaron's grave. Yaron was kidnapped and murdered by terrorists just months after Yehoshua.

This is what it means to be part of Am Yisrael. To carry the memory of our brothers and sisters. To live our lives on the shoulders of heroes. And somehow, even with all the tears, to remain the most blessed generation in 2,000 years, sovereign in our land, defended by our own, and determined to keep going.

May the memories of Yaron, Dameon, Ari, Yehoshua, the Nova victims, and all our fallen in all of our wars and terror attacks be a source of strength and justice from above.

Take a few minutes to learn about some of these individuals yourselves, helping to internalize the meaning and power of the day. We remember. We carry. And we will never stop walking forward.

Am Yisrael Chai!!!

STORY #1: YARON CHEN HY"D KILLED BY HAMAS IN A KIDNAPPING IN 1993

There are friends you remember. And there are friends who shape who you are forever.

Yaron Chen was my friend. We learned together in Yeshivat Ohr Etzion before drafting to the army, each to our own unit, but with the same foundation of Torah, responsibility, and purpose.

In 1993, on his way home from base, Yaron was kidnapped by Hamas terrorists. He fought them. He struggled with them. He didn't go quietly.

They murdered him.

Only later did we understand the full horror—they had planned to use him as a bargaining chip, to blackmail Israel into releasing terrorists. When they failed, they killed him. Months later, they tried again with Nachshon Wachsman.

That is the enemy we face. And that is who Yaron was. A Jew who didn't surrender. A soldier who fought even in his final moments. A young man of Torah who carried strength within him.

Yom HaZikaron is not just about remembering.

It's about understanding the price we pay to live here as free Jews in our land—and the kind of people who pay that price.

Yaron was one of them. May his memory be a blessing. And may we live with the strength and purpose he embodied.

STORY #2: DAMEON KLEIN HY"D KILLED IN THE BEIT LID DOUBLE SUICIDE BOMBING IN 1995

Dameon Refael Klein was my friend. Both of us new immigrants to Israel. Me from the United States and Dameon from Argentina. We served together in the Golani infantry brigade. He was driven, focused, on his way to becoming an officer. Even before that, he was already a leader.

He was a combat medic.

On the day of the Beit Lid suicide bombing, the first explosion hit soldiers waiting for buses. Chaos. Wounded everywhere.

Dameon didn't hesitate.
He ran in to save lives.

Then the second explosion went off, targeting the rescuers.
That's how he fell.

That's the difference between us and our enemies.
They plan how to kill.
We run to save.

Dameon didn't die by chance.
He died because he chose to act, for others.

That's what it means to be a Jewish soldier in Israel.
May his memory be a blessing.
And may we be worthy of the life he gave.

STORY #3: ARI FULD HY"D KILLED IN A TERRORIST ATTACK IN 2018

Ari was a childhood friend who became part of my life story.

We grew up together. Elementary school. The early years when life is simple, but foundations are built. We both made aliyah to Israel, me after Junior year of High School, and Ari after graduating High School. We both served in the Golani brigade in the IDF. After the army, our paths brought us together again in the Old City of Jerusalem, the first ever Bagel shop in the Old City of Jerusalem, building something with our own hands in the heart of our people's history.

And then life continued, as it does. We built families. And not just anywhere, we raised our families next door to each other in Efrat. Neighbors. Friends. Brothers in life. Partners in spreading the truth about Israel, Torah and the Jewish people to the world on social media.

Ari was larger than life. Passionate. Fearless. A lion in how he lived, speaking truth, standing strong, loving his people without apology. And in the end... he was a lion in how he died.

In 2018, when a terrorist stabbed him, the wound should have killed him instantly. His main artery was severed.

It didn't.

In what doctors who treated him described as a miracle, Ari didn't fall. He turned. He ran. He pursued his attacker. And he fired, stopping the terrorist, saving the lives of others.

Only then did he collapse.

That is not normal.
That is not natural.
That is the strength of a Jewish soul that refuses to give in, even in its final moments.

Today, many know his story. They call him the “Lion of Zion.”

But for me, he’s also the kid from elementary school.
The young man building a life in Jerusalem.
The neighbor raising a family right next to mine.

Ari didn’t just die a hero.
He lived as one.

And his final act wasn’t separate from his life, it was the ultimate expression of everything he stood for.

Courage. Responsibility. Love of the Jewish people. Refusal to be a victim.

On Yom HaZikaron, we remember.
But more than that, we choose.

We choose to live with that same strength.
That same clarity.
That same refusal to back down.

Ari showed us what that looks like.
May his memory be a blessing.
And may we live lives worthy of the Lion of Zion.

STORY #4: YEHOShUA FRIEDBERG HY"D KILLED BY A TERRORIST IN 1993

There are connections in the Jewish story that are not coincidence. They are threads of destiny.

Yehoshua Friedberg was one of those souls. A Jewish teen from Canada, not from a religious background, decides to come to Israel to learn Torah, and chose to stay, to become religious and to serve the Jewish people by becoming part of the rebuilding of Jewish sovereignty in our land. He served in the IDF and was on his way to becoming an officer.

A builder.

A believer.

A Jewish warrior in the deepest sense of the word.

I did not merit to know Yehoshua personally. But like so many in our small Jewish world, our lives were connected. I was good friends and colleagues with his fiancée at the time, Keren. Years later, I've also been in touch with his father, Herb, whom I interviewed for Pulse of Israel, an episode everyone should watch.

And then there is another connection.

Ari Fuld hy"d, my childhood friend, my neighbor, the "Lion of Zion"—was Yehoshua's good friend. After Yehoshua was murdered by terrorists in the 90s, Ari took it upon himself to keep his memory alive.

That's who Ari was.

And ever since Ari himself was murdered, I've felt a responsibility to continue that mission.

So every year, I go to Har Herzl for Yom HaZikaron, to visit Yehoshua's grave.

Because with so many people visiting Ari's grave, one of the ways I can help keep Yehoshua's memory alive is simply by being there for him. By remembering. By connecting the chain.

FOUR LIVES

A few years ago, I discovered something that shook me.

My friend from yeshiva, Yaron Chen, who was kidnapped and murdered by terrorists just months after Yehoshua, is buried just a few feet away.

Four lives.

Four stories.

Four Jewish souls who chose to build, to serve, to stand, and were taken by the same evil.

But here's what our enemies never understand:

They think they end a story. They don't. They create a chain.

Yehoshua's memory lived on through Ari.

Ari's memory now lives on through all of us.

And together, we carry them forward.

Yom HaZikaron is not just about loss.

It's about responsibility. To remember. To connect. To continue what they started.

May the memories of Yehoshua Friedberg, Ari Fuld, and Yaron Chen be a blessing.

And may we live lives worthy of carrying their story forward.

They gave their lives so that the Jewish people could live as a free nation in our land.

The Transition to Israel Independence Day

The Most Powerful Moment on Earth

There is no moment like this anywhere in the world.

A siren sounds to begin Memorial Day.

An entire nation stands still.

We remember.

We mourn for day.

And then... it ends.

And within moments, just 24 hours later, in a split second, everything changes.

From silence...to celebration.

From mourning...to music.

Why?

Because the sacrifice worked.

Many people think that Yom Hazikaron and Yom Ha'atzmaut are two separate days, but they are really two different parts to the same celebration.

It is only because of the sacrifice of all those we lost in our wars that we have a Jewish state of Israel today, the third Jewish commonwealth, now 78 years young, but more than 3,000 years old.

Yom Ha'atzmaut

For the first time in over 2,000 years, after centuries of exile, persecution, and wandering, and in the immediate aftermath of six million Jews brutally murdered by the Nazis, when our people stood on the brink of annihilation, the Jewish people returned to full sovereignty in our ancestral homeland, becoming the only indigenous nation in history to reclaim and reestablish its independence in its original land.

This is not just a national holiday, this is a religious holiday.

Just to put things into perspective, let's remember...

In 1948, a nation of just 600,000 Jews in Israel, many of them broken survivors of the Holocaust, barely three years removed from the ashes, stood up to face the combined armies of the Arab world.

Organized, equipped, and in many cases trained and backed by the British, they came to finish what Europe had started. And what did the Jews have? No real army. No reliable weapons supply. No powerful allies rushing to our side.

We were smuggling in scraps, plane parts in pieces, assembling them under fire, sending up volunteer Jewish pilots who dropped makeshift bombs from the sky because that's all we had. By every natural calculation, we were supposed to lose. But we didn't. We fought with courage, with faith, with a clarity that this was our one chance to live as a free people in our land. And somehow, beyond logic, beyond military odds, we didn't just survive. We won. That wasn't just a victory. That was a revelation of who we are when we refuse to go back to being victims.

Divine Assistance

In 1956, Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik delivered a speech, later written down titled “Kol Dodi Dofek”, “the voice of my Beloved knocking” (from Shir HaShirim), describing the establishment of the State of Israel as expressed through six heavenly, historical “knocks”.

1. Political Knock - International Recognition

The nations of the world (UN vote, 1947) recognized the right of the Jewish people to a state.

Meaning:

- A historic reversal after centuries of statelessness
- The world opening the door for Jewish sovereignty

2. Military Knock - Survival & Victory

Israel’s miraculous victory in the War of Independence against overwhelming odds.

Meaning:

- From helplessness to self-defense
- Proof Jews can protect themselves

3. Historical Knock - End of Powerlessness in Exile

Jews are no longer dependent on others for survival.

Meaning:

- Shift in Jewish destiny
- Responsibility now in our hands

4. Refuge Knock - Gathering of Exiles

Israel becomes a refuge for Jews fleeing persecution (Holocaust survivors, Arab lands, etc.)

Meaning:

- A home for every Jew
- “Never again” becomes practical reality

5. Religious/Cultural Knock - Revival of Jewish Life

Rebirth of Torah life, Hebrew language, Jewish culture in a sovereign land.

Meaning:

- Judaism returns to full national expression
- Not just religion, but civilization

6. Economic Knock - Material Development

Building a functioning, growing economy in the land.

Meaning:

- Ability to sustain sovereignty
- Physical rebuilding of the nation

And Rav Soloveitchik asked:

Did the Jewish people hear the knocks?

What are Jews doing to “open the door”?

Ask Yourself

Why do you think Israel moves directly from the mourning of Yom Hazikaron to the celebration of Yom Ha'atzmaut?

What does that say about the Jewish people?

That is a very rough transition for many, especially for those who paid the price of losing loved ones. How does one do it?

What Are We Celebrating?

We are celebrating something Jews did not have for 2,000 years:

Power.

Sovereignty.

Control over our destiny.

We are no longer victims of history.

We are writing it.

Do the Jewish people hear God's heavenly knocks and recognize his hand in the establishment and existence of the State of Israel?

How are we supposed to answer these divine "knocks"?

Should Israel Independence Day be celebrated as a religious holiday by all Jews? And if so, how?

THE SHIFT

From Victims to Victors

Then:

- Exile
- Dependence
- Weakness
-

Now:

- Strength
- Independence
- Responsibility

For two thousand years we lived as victims. Second-class citizens. Persecuted. Exiled.

History didn't just change.
We changed it.

How many Jews today truly see ourselves as victors today?

Amid rising Jew-hating antisemitism today, how many Jews recognize that for over 2,000 years our ancestors faced far worse, without a sovereign State of Israel to project Jewish independence and strength to the world?

What must be done to help more Jews see the full picture of our reality today, as victors, not victims?

ACTION....

What Does All This Mean For You?

Being Jewish today isn't passive, it's a responsibility. Not about dwelling in victimhood, but about projecting our extraordinary and miraculous reality as a people restored to strength.

- Learn the truth about Israel
- Put all the headline news in perspective
- Speak with confidence
- Strengthen your Jewish identity at home
- Stand proudly as a Jew

DISCUSSION

1. What does it mean that Jews are no longer powerless?

Points to discuss:

- IDF, sovereignty, self-defense
- Shift from victimhood → responsibility
- Emotional vs. practical meaning

2. What responsibilities come with having our own state?

Points to discuss:

- Protecting Jewish lives
- Moral use of power
- Representing the Jewish people globally

3. How is Jewish life today different from 100 years ago?

Points to discuss:

- Before vs. after Israel
- Safety, identity, pride
- Ability to shape our own destiny

4. What is the connection between Yom HaShoah, Yom HaZikaron, and Yom Ha'atzmaut?

Points to discuss:

- From destruction → sacrifice → independence
- Price of not having a state vs. price of having one
- Emotional transition between the days
-

5. Why do we honor soldiers and victims of terror together on Yom HaZikaron?

Points to discuss:

- One shared national mission
- Enemy doesn't differentiate
- Unity of the Jewish people

6. What does true victory for Israel look like?

Points to discuss:

- Military vs. long-term security
- Living without fear
- Moral clarity and national strength

7. What lessons should we learn from the stories of fallen soldiers?

Points to discuss:

- Courage, sacrifice, responsibility
- Personal vs. national meaning
- How their choices impact our lives today

8. How should Jews living outside of Israel connect to these days?

Points to discuss:

- Shared identity and destiny
- Supporting Israel vs. living in Israel
- Emotional and practical connection

9. What does it mean to live with gratitude for the State of Israel?

Points to discuss:

- Not taking sovereignty for granted
- Daily awareness vs. symbolic moments
- Turning gratitude into action

10. What role does each of us have in the future of Israel and the Jewish people?

Points to discuss:

- Personal responsibility
- Aliyah, advocacy, education
- Living with purpose as part of a bigger story

CLOSING REFLECTION

What does “From Sacrifice to Sovereignty” mean to you personally?

Points to discuss:

- Connecting all three days together
- Internal vs. external meaning
- How it should change how we live going forward

What is one thing we will do differently this year as proud Jews?

You Are Part of This Story

The Jewish people are not just remembering history.

We are living it.

And the question is:

What can you do to step into this role?

If this guide added meaning to your family's experience...
Help us continue this mission.

Pulse of Israel exists to strengthen Jewish identity and share the belief-based truth about Israel to Jews around the world.

Become a partner to join Our Mission and support our work!

- Monthly support helps stabilize and grow our impact
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