

HANNA & MIKE'S *EXCELLENT* ISRAELI HISTORY ADVENTURE

Adapted from a program created by NFTY-NE

With Israel being an important focus in our lives, and with the NFTY Convention 2003 theme being "Libi B'Mizrach – My Heart is in the East", this month's Study Theme program focuses on the Jewish community of Israel.

GOALS:

- To give program participants a foundation of the history of modern Israel
- To gain a sense of a personal connection to Israeli history via the play and discussion

OBJECTIVES:

- Participants will enjoy a play that will provide an overview of the history of modern Israel.
- Participants will have discussion in small groups to allow them to find a personal connection with the people of Israel.

BACKGROUND INFO:

This is a great deal of information to hit the participants with in a short period of time. It is meant to be an overview of Israeli History. The bulk of the time will be a performance, so it is important for the players to really get into their roles in order to maintain the attention of the participants.

MATERIALS:

curtain for characters to wait behind before their scene
History notebook (for Mike in Excellent Adventure)
Costumes for each of the 7 characters

PEOPLE:

group leaders (one per breakout group – there should be no more than 8 people in a group)
2 rovers
2 narrators (Hannah & Mike) in Excellent Adventure (can also serve as the rovers)
9 actors in Excellent Adventure
Theodore Herzl, Elie Wiesel, David Ben Gurion, Daniel, Daniel's mother, Menachem Begin, Benjamin Netanyahu, Ehud Barak & Ariel Sharon

SPACE NEEDS:

The "Excellent Adventure" performance should take place in a large room with participants facing a "stage".
There should be one location for each small group to go and have their 20 minute discussion
The Wrap-up can take place in the same large room where the "Excellent Adventure" took place.

TIMED PROCEDURE:

00:00 – 00:45 Excellent Adventure
00:45 – 01:00 Break into groups, stretch and name game
01:00 – 01:20 Discussion
01:20 – 01:25 Re-Group
01:25 – 01:30 Wrap-Up
Total : 90 min.

NOTES TO PROGRAM LEADER:

- The names "Hannah" and "Mike" can be changed to the names of whoever plays these characters in your TYG.
- Remember that the performance is long, so if possible, have it in a location where participants will be comfortable sitting for a long time. If possible, have them in chairs and not sitting on the floor.

DETAILED PROCEDURE:

00:00 – 00:45 Excellent Adventure (see attached script)

00:45 – 01:00 Break into groups, stretch and name game

GL: “Hi everyone. Before we begin, let’s take a moment to stretch because we were all just sitting for a long time! Okay, we’re going to start this off with a name game... alright; name, school and your reaction to the play you just saw.”

(I thought it was so funny!)

(Wow, what a load of information!)

(The soldier part was really cool.)

(I like Benjamin Netanyahu’s speech at the end.)

01:00 – 01:20 Discussion

GL: “Great! Now what is something you’ve really wanted in your life and worked hard to get or achieve, and then worked hard as well to maintain?”

(Good grades.)

(A good relationship with my older sister.)

(To get on the Varsity Tennis team and play a match at every tournament.)

GL: “Great! So does anyone want to elaborate a bit on their experience?”

(Well, it was really hard for me to achieve my dream because I felt like school got in the way of it and I never had time.)

(I was really insecure about my singing ability, so I had to build up my confidence first, but finally I made it into the choir.)

GL: “So it sounds like these things are so important to you all because there were serious obstacles you had to overcome to get what you wanted. Do you think internal obstacles or external obstacles are harder to overcome?”

(Internal because you can’t change yourself really. If you are blocking you, it’s impossible to get beyond that.)

(External for sure. You can control yourself more than you can control other people.)

GL: “What do you think is something the Jewish people have wanted most for themselves on the whole?”

(A homeland of their own; somewhere they would be safe and free from persecution.)

GL: “Sounds like quite an endorsement for Israel. Now what did you guys think about Benjamin Netanyahu’s opinion (at Israel’s 50th anniversary) of what Israel has strived for and what it has strived to be all along? Do *you* think that later Israeli history has realized the dreams of the Zionists and founders of Israel?”

(Israel has strived for security all along, just like Netanyahu said. That’s why Jews came in the first place.)

(Israel did achieve the dreams of the Zionists. Israel is now a country, and that is what the Zionists wanted.)

(Israel did not achieve the dreams of the Zionists. They have been at war the whole time! They wanted security, not just nationhood. They achieved the dream but could not maintain it.)

GL: "Do you think its obstacles in achieving its dream have been more internal or external?"

(More external! They have been at war since they've become a nation...)

GL: "Well, going back to our first discussion, do you think Israel would have had an easier time had its problems been more internal?"

(Yes. (If they had agreed that internal obstacles were harder to overcome.))

GL: "We saw in the show how each person's experiences were shaped by the life of the previous person, and how their own lives influenced the events of the next person's life. Also, Daniel and his mother's experiences illustrated how one event can lead to another, and that can lead to another, and on and on until we have this political mess. Do you think such a path (trajectory) could now be reversed or even stopped? Is only hindsight 20/20?"

(I don't think it could be stopped because, like you said, one event always DOES lead to the next.)

(And you can see what an impact just one person can have on society! So there are always going to be leaders who you can't control; you can't warn them that they're making a bad decision because they're always having to decide what to do on their own anyways.)

GL: "Great! What do you think was the most significant person represented in that presentation?"

(Herzl for sure! Without him, we wouldn't have had the strength in political Zionism necessary to build Israel.)

GL: "Wonderful answers! Okay let's go through now and pick one word or phrase to describe each person."

(Theodor Herzl- hopeful, Elie Wiesel- brave, David Ben Gurion- great leader, Soldier- persevering, Menachem Begin- diplomatic, Benjamin Netanyahu- worldly.)

GL: "Great! Now we're going to come up with one phrase that sums up all of modern Israeli history."

(Struggle for security for the Jewish people)

(Making a religious group into a political reality)

(Persevering through obstacles)

GL: "Isn't it interesting how the ways we described the people also reflected our phrase to describe Israeli history? That was the goal of this program- each speaker was chosen not only to represent the time period they lived in, but the entire history of Israel as well! So whenever you think of these 6 people, think about how what they accomplished in their lives represents Israel's accomplishments as a nation as well. I sincerely hope you enjoyed this program! Just one final question for you all: Did Mike and Hanna get an A on their Israeli history test?"

(Of course!!)

GL: "That's certainly the right answer! Now let's re-group with the others to wrap things up."

01:20 – 01:25 Re-Group

01:25 – 01:30 Wrap-Up

Hanna: "Hey everyone! Let's have a round of applause for all of our actors in our Excellent Adventure!"

[Actors should stand up and take a bow.]

Mike: "I think we can all agree that they did an outstanding job bringing you the modern history of Israel in a very real way in only one hour! So thank you so much! And of course, thanks are certainly due to all of the group leaders. I really appreciate you guys making this happen! Participants, thanks so much for trusting in your leaders! You all made this program a success!"

Script for Hannah & Mike's Excellent Israeli History Adventure

Scene: [Hanna sleeping on floor. Mike next to her sitting up.]

Mike: "Hanna, come on. Wake up! We have to finish studying for our history test."

Hanna [*waking from her sleep*]: "No Mike. I haven't absorbed anything about Israeli history and I feel like I've been cramming for 40 days and 40 nights. It's like reading ancient Midrash. It's all Yiddish to me."

Mike: "Maybe we need to try some alternate methods..."

Hanna: "Like what Mike? Luck?"

Mike: "Sure! You might as well just wish on a lucky star."

Hanna: "Star light, star bright, first star I see tonight, I wish I may, I wish I might, have this wish I wish tonight. I wish someone would just tell me the answers! It would be so much better if I could just see the people, be in the places..."

Mike: "Yeah, right. Let's just go to bed and pray that we can do well in the morning."

[Mike and Hanna sleep.]

[Theodor Herzl comes out by himself and stands behind lit curtain.]

Theodor Herzl (*played by actor*): "Hanna. Mike. You are the chosen people. Or students, in this case! I am here to answer your prayer."

Mike: "Hanna, wake up! Theodor Herzl is here! He's in our room! Your wish came true! Shh... he's speaking!"

[Mike and Hanna sit up and listen.]

Theodor Herzl: "So I heard you want to know about Israeli history. Well, the road to Israel was long. The Jewish people needed a state, and many people (myself included) felt that assimilation was the key to overcoming anti-Semitism. But sometimes you see things that make you change your mind. Such was the case with Captain Alfred Dreyfus. In the mid-1890s, Dreyfus, a Jew in the French army, was arrested on charges of high treason. Eventually it became clear that he had been framed by anti-Semites, but I was at the trial when it happened, and I watched as he was stripped of all his military honors and his pride. When an anti-Semitic political party nearly won an election in Vienna in 1895, I decided things had gone too far. I hadn't been very religious before that, but soon I attended my first service. I found it solemn and moving. I began to be obsessed with the thought that I had to do something for the Jews.

In June of 1895 my newest ideas came together, and I wrote a little book called *The Jewish State*. You see, wherever Jews lived, they were a minority. Little seemed to unite them; most did not speak Hebrew. I decided that the Jews were a people: *one* people. And our enemies had made us *one* whether we would or not, as had repeatedly happened in history. Because of this oneness, we needed a home of our own to survive. Thus I became the father of political Zionism.

My thinking of explanations for anti-Semitism went something like this. Having been forced to live together in ghettos during the Middle Ages, Jews had to develop financial skills in order to survive financially. Once allowed out of the ghetto, these skills enabled them to compete successfully with their non-Jewish neighbors, who came to resent and fear their financial power. Anti-Semitism, then, was based on economic competition. This being so, once the Jews had begun to leave for the new state, anti-

Semitism would draw to an end. And since the Jewish exodus would take place slowly, there would be no economic upheavals in the countries they left.

I knew there could be a Jewish state established by diplomatic means (hence the *political* Zionism) because anti-Semitism not only caused Jewish suffering, but also disturbed the peace of Gentile society. Therefore the governments of Europe would help to establish a Jewish state.

I honestly believed that Zionism was simply a peacemaker. And it suffered the usual fate of peacemakers, in being forced to fight more than anyone else. I believed that Zionism was a peacemaker worth fighting for, and I'm glad to see that my wish came true. Speaking of wishes, I hope you do well on your history final tomorrow... Hit the books, kids!"

[Hanna opens book.]

Hanna: "Woah, it says here that Herzl really did believe strongly in what he wanted, and he won the fight! During the First World War, British policy became gradually committed to the idea of establishing a Jewish home in Palestine (Eretz Yisrael). After discussions in the British Cabinet, and consultation with Zionist leaders, the decision was made known in the form of a letter by Arthur James Lord Balfour to Lord Rothschild. The letter, known as the Balfour Declaration and written on November 2, 1917 represents the first political recognition of Zionist aims by a Great Power."

Mike: "But Hanna! We shouldn't ignore all of the other Zionists who worked hard to achieve a Jewish state. In fact, though Herzl was the father of *political* Zionism, there were other kinds of Zionism as well! Political Zionism sought a homeland for Jewish people. However, religious aspects were missing and many political Zionists were not opposed to the United Nations' suggestion that the Jewish state be set up in Uganda. Cultural Zionists felt that Judaism was as much about culture as religion. They sought to form a settlement in Palestine as a sort of "hub" to the wheel of Judaism, from which the "spokes" of the diaspora would radiate. Labor Zionists, whose ideals have now been incorporated into the modern Labor political party in Israel, believed that owning land and working it in Israel would bring the Jewish people. They felt that labor would be redemptive. And Elie Wiesel, a survivor of the Holocaust, writer, and man who aided in Israel's establishment, felt that true Zionism meant settling the land. Essentially, he fell to the side of Labor Zionism. Of course, his experiences during the Holocaust..."

Hanna *[interrupts]*: "All this history has made me hungry! I feel like all I've eaten is Manna and I need something more. I'm running to the kitchen, do you want anything?"

Mike: "No, that's okay."

[Hanna gets up and goes into the other room (behind the curtain). She runs back out and Elie Wiesel appears behind curtain.]

Hanna: "Mike! You'll never believe it! Elie Wiesel is in the kitchen!"

Mike: "No way! I wonder if he'll tell us what it was like to live through all that..."

[Elie appears behind the curtain.]

Elie Wiesel: "Hello kids. I heard you needed some help with your history exam studying. I guess I've been through some of it, so why don't I tell you about it? I was just 15 years old when I was deported by the Nazis to Auschwitz. There my mother and younger sister perished, and my two older sisters survived. My father and I were later transported to Buchenwald, where my father died shortly before the camp was liberated in April 1945. My experiences were certainly devastating. Since the Holocaust I have written more than forty books of fiction and non-fiction. One particularly meaningful book, *Night*, documents my experiences during the Holocaust. I'd like to read you a short excerpt from it now:

Never shall I forget that night, the first night in camp, which has turned my life into one long night, seven times cursed and seven times sealed. Never shall I forget that smoke. Never shall I forget the little faces of the children, whose bodies I saw turned into wreaths of smoke beneath a silent blue sky. Never shall I forget those flames which consumed my faith forever.

Never shall I forget that nocturnal silence which deprived me, for all eternity, of the desire to live. Never shall I forget those moments which murdered my God and my soul and turned my dreams to dust. Never shall I forget these things, even if I am condemned to live as long as God Himself. Never.

I aided in the establishment of Israel. I feel a strong personal duty to prevent another incidence like the Holocaust. The Jewish people needed a home. Basic human rights dictated that they *deserved* a home- a place where their rights could not be violated and their lives would be protected. So the Jews found a home in Eretz Yisrael.

You guys look tired. I'm gonna head home."

Mike: "Don't go Elie! We still don't know enough!"

[Elie Wiesel disappears behind the curtain.]

Hanna: "Yeah, I should find that same star and wish on it again!"

[David Ben Gurion appears behind curtain.]

David Ben Gurion: "Too late! Prime Minister David Ben Gurion here, at your service! My friends told me you needed a little bit of help, and I'm good at helping. I have done quite a bit of helping for Israel. I became general secretary of the Histadrut labor federation in 1921; in 1930 I formed Mapai, the Zionist labor party; and in 1935 I became chairman of the executive committee of the Jewish Agency for Palestine. In Tel Aviv, on May 14, 1948, I had the honor of proclaiming independence for the State of Israel. Please allow me to read you the Declaration of Independence, as I did that day in May in Tel Aviv:

THE STATE OF ISRAEL

- Will be open to the immigration of Jews from all countries in which they live in the world;
- Will promote the development of the country for the benefit of all those who live there;
- Will be based on the ideas of liberty, justice, and peace taught by the Hebrew prophets;
- Will uphold the full social and political equality of all its citizens without distinction of race, creed, or sex;
- Will guarantee full freedom of conscience, worship, education, and culture;
- Will safeguard the specialness and sacredness of the shrines and holy places of all religions;
- And will dedicate itself to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations...
- We offer peace and unity to all the neighboring states and their peoples,
- And invite them to cooperate with the independent Jewish nation for the common good of all.
- Our call goes out to the Jewish people all over the world to rally to our side in the task of immigration and development, and to stand by us in the great struggle for the fulfillment of the dream of generations- the redemption of Israel."

Hanna *[picking up book]*: "It's so weird that he read that declaration to us after Herzl was just here too Mike! It says in this book that David Ben Gurion read that declaration while a picture of Theodor Herzl hung on the wall behind him. Isn't it strange how in history, each thing that happens directly impacts the next thing that happens?"

Mike: “Yeah, it is pretty NIFTY I guess that things work out that way! This history stuff is really starting to hold my attention, Hanna! Read to me some more from that book of yours!”

Hanna: “Well, sure Mike! So the very next day, five Arab states invaded Israel. After that, Ben Gurion continued as prime minister for 15 years (except 1953-1955), during which time the young country fought two wars (the War of Independence and the Sinai Campaign) while tripling its population from 1/2 million to 1 1/2 million. His leadership saw the establishment of the Israel Defense Forces in 1948, the signing of armistice agreements with Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria, and the division of Jerusalem under Israeli and Jordanian rule in 1949. That year, under his guidance the first Knesset was elected and Israel was admitted to the United Nations as the 59th member. Mass immigration from Europe and Arab countries took place from 1948 to 1952.

Mike: “Wait Hanna! You’re losing me again. Just tell me the important stuff!”

Hanna: “Fine Mike... Okay so in short, under Ben Gurion Israel truly became a nation. Even after he lost the leadership of his party, he remained in the Knesset until his retirement from politics in 1970. He died on his kibbutz, Sde Boker in the Negev, during the Yom Kippur War, on December 1, 1973.”

Mike: “But Hanna, what WAS the Yom Kippur War? I don’t understand!”

Hanna: “Well, here. You read about it in this book while I ACTUALLY go get a snack now.”

[Hanna goes to Dining Room.]

[Mike picks up the book and starts “reading” silently.]

Hanna *[running out]*: “Mike, Mike! There’s a man with a gun in the kitchen! What did you do this time?!”

Mike: “I didn’t wish for anything, I swear! They just keep coming...”

[Soldier appears with mother behind curtain.]

Mother: “Daniel, don’t go off to war.”

Daniel: “It’s my duty! I’m 18... I’ll be drafted anyways, but I want to defend my country?”

Mother: “Like your father defended his country and was killed?”

Daniel: “I’ll die in honor.”

Mother: “You don’t even know what it means to die in honor!”

Daniel: “You’re right! I don’t know what it means, and I don’t know anything about the wars my father fought either because you always tried to protect me from it!”

Mother: “Fine! You asked for the truth, and it is certainly a harsh reality... Daniel, you know you were born in Israel at the same time Israel was born- 1948. So you were just an infant during the first war and only 8 years old at the time of the second. The first war immediately followed the proclamation of the State of Israel, May 14, 1948. Arab forces from Egypt, Transjordan, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon occupied the areas in southern and eastern Palestine not apportioned to the Jews, then captured the small Jewish quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem. The Israelis, meanwhile, won control of the main road to Jerusalem through the Yehuda Mountains (Judean Hills) and successfully beat off Arab attacks. By early 1949 the

Israelis managed to occupy all of the Negev up to the former Egypt-Palestine frontier, except for the Gaza Strip. Between February and July 1949, as a result of separate armistice agreements between Israel and the Arab states, a temporary frontier was fixed where the line had been at the beginning of the negotiations.

So that was the first war. Luckily your father survived. I told him we would move from Israel if there was more fighting, that we could go live somewhere in peace, but he had his stupid dreams of honor just like you. So he was right there in the second war too.

Daniel: "What happened in the second war?"

Mother: "Well, tensions mounted again with the rise to power of the nationalist Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser; in October 1956, in the midst of the international crisis caused by Nasser's seizure of the European-owned Suez Canal, Israel invaded the Sinai Peninsula to destroy Arab military bases there. In only five short days the Israeli army had captured all of this: Gaza, Rafah, and Al-'Arish--taking thousands of prisoners--and occupied most of the peninsula east of the Suez Canal. Your father was stationed at Gaza.

Daniel: "The Gaza you told me about?"

Mother: "Yes, Daniel. The same Gaza where your father was killed. The Israelis got control of it, but your father was shot. Just because you have control of the land doesn't mean that you're safe. In December, after a joint Anglo-French intervention, a United Nations (UN) Emergency Force was stationed in the area, and Israeli forces withdrew in March 1957. So even with all of your father's efforts and idealism, we lost it in the end anyways. I love Israel- it's our home. But sometimes it isn't worth fighting so hard to accomplish very little."

Daniel: "Israel is our land! I was born in 1948 along with Israel, and it has been such a good home to us. We don't need to accomplish anything, we just need to defend our land. And the government says I am of the fighting age now. If I don't fight to defend you and our home, who will?"

[Mother and Daniel exit to opposite sides behind the curtain.]

Mike: "Oh my God, Hanna! I can't believe how sad that was..."

Hanna: "No kidding, Mike... I wonder if Daniel ever did go off to war."

Mike: "Yeah, I wish they didn't leave us hanging like that! Let's see what it says in our book..." *[leafing through book]* "Hmm... it says here that by the time the next war rolled around, Daniel would have been, hmm, let's see, 19. Fighting age. You see, when you turn 18 in Israel you must serve a term in the army."

[Hanna nods.]

Mike: "In 1967, Arab and Israeli forces clashed again from June 5 to June 10, in what came to be called the Six-Day War. In early 1967 Syrian bombardments of Israeli villages had been intensified. When the Israeli Air Force shot down six Syrian planes in retaliation, leader of Egypt Nasser mobilized his forces near the Sinai border. During this war Israel actually eliminated the Egyptian air force and established air superiority. The war cost the Arabs the Old City of Jerusalem, the Sinai and the Gaza Strip, the Jordanian territory west of the Jordan River known as the West Bank, and the Golan Heights, on the Israeli-Syrian border. "

Hanna: "Go Israel! What else?"

Mike: “Well, don’t get too excited. Wars are never good things, even if you’re on the side that’s winning. The sporadic fighting that followed the Six-Day War AGAIN developed into full-scale war in 1973. On October 6, right in the midst of Yom Kippur (thus “Yom Kippur War”), Israel was attacked by Egypt across the Suez Canal and by Syria on the Golan Heights. The Arab armies showed greater aggressiveness and fighting ability than in the previous wars, and the Israeli forces suffered heavy casualties...”

[Daniel and Mother run behind the curtain again and hug tightly.]

Daniel: “Mother! I’m so happy to see you!”

Mother: “My baby Daniel! I’m so happy you survived!”

Daniel: “I was so lucky to; three of my closest friends were killed.”

Mother: “I knew you should never have gone to war. I hate myself for letting you leave.”

Daniel: “But Mother! Don’t you see! My friends didn’t die in vain... Our army pushed on until we arrived in Syrian territory and encircled the Egyptian Third Army by crossing the Suez Canal and establishing forces on its west bank. We then signed a cease-fire agreement with Egypt in November. Then on Jan. 18, 1974, we signed even more peace agreements with Egypt. These accords provided for Israeli withdrawal into the Sinai west of the Mitla and Gidi passes, while Egypt was to reduce the size of its forces on the east bank of the canal. A UN peace-keeping force was established between the two armies. This agreement was supplemented by another signed on Sept. 4, 1975. See Mother! We’re accomplishing peace- what we’ve always dreamed of!”

[Hanna at this point has dozed off a little.]

Mike: “Hanna, wake up! They got peace!!”

Hanna [*waking*]: “Peace in Israel? How?!”

Mike: “I don’t know! Read the book to find out what happened next!”

Hanna [*reading*]: “Oh wow! They did get peace. It says here that on March 26, 1979, Israel and Egypt signed a peace treaty that formally ended the state of war that had existed between the two countries for 30 years.”

Mike: “Are you serious?! They ended war after THIRTY years?!”

Hanna: “They sure did, but not without some serious sacrifices. Under the terms of the Camp David Accords, as the treaty was called, Israel returned the entire Sinai Peninsula to Egypt-

Mike [*interrupting*]: “That’s what Daniel’s father fought for!”

Hanna: “Right!”

Mike: “So what did Israel get in return then?”

Hanna: “In return, Egypt recognized Israel's right to exist. The two nations subsequently established normal diplomatic relations with each other.”

Mike: “Wait, these Camp David Accords sound pretty important, but I don’t feel like I have enough of a grasp on them yet... So I’ll go to the bathroom, and when I get back, we’ll review this a bit.”

Hanna: “Mike, you can’t go to the bathroom now! We’re just getting to the important part!”

Mike: “I gotta go!!”

Hanna: “Fine.”

[Mike runs out, and runs immediately back in.]

Hanna: “Mike that was fast even for you!”

[Mike panting and muttering incoherently.]

Hanna: “Mike, did you pee in your pants again?!”

Mike [regaining composure]: “Hanna, it’s the dude!”

Hanna: “What dude?”

Mike: “The Israeli dude!”

Hanna: “Which Israeli dude?”

Mike: “I don’t know! I didn’t study well enough to know his name! But I know he’s super important!!”

Hanna: “Okay, relax Mike. Sit with me and everything will be okay!”

[Menachem Begin appears behind curtain.]

Menachem Begin: “Hello. I am Menachem Begin. I served as Prime Minister of Israel for six and a half years, from the spring of 1977 to the fall of 1983. As you know from the soldier you’ve just met, these were not exactly peaceful times. My most outstanding achievement, then, was likely the signing of the Peace Treaty with Egypt. In November 1977, six months after I became Prime Minister, President Anwar Sadat of Egypt came to Jerusalem. This visit inaugurated two years of negotiations that culminated in the Camp David Accords, which called for Israel’s withdrawal from Sinai and the establishment of Palestinian autonomy, in exchange for peace and normal relations with Egypt. A Treaty of Peace terminating the state of war between the two countries was signed in 1979. Myself and President Sadat were awarded the 1978 Nobel Peace Prize for this achievement. In the spring of 1982, despite widespread protest in Israel, I - who put much store in legal documents - withdrew from Sinai, including the town of Yamit and the other Jewish settlements. Since I am so proud of my achievements with the Camp David Accords, and they were such a turning point in history, I think you guys should take some time reviewing them a bit...”

[Menachem exits behind curtain.]

Hanna: “You were right! He was important!”

Mike: “Maybe we should do what he said and review the Accords then...”

Hanna: “Good call, I’ll get the book. But you have to read to me! I’m tired now.”

Mike [*getting book*]: “Just don’t fall asleep on me now! [*leafing through*] Okay, so after twelve days of secret negotiations at Camp David, the Israeli-Egyptian negotiations were concluded by the signing at the White House of two agreements.”

Hanna: “Wait, AMERICA was involved?!”

Mike: “Yeah, even I knew that one!”

Hanna: “Well I definitely didn’t... That is so significant Mike! So the Accords were not only a 12 day effort towards peace, which we seem to always be striving towards in Israel; but also the first time the United States played such an active role in Middle East negotiations. And we know how the United States would continue its involvement with Israel into the 21st century.”

Mike: “Wow that is significant. But so were the agreements themselves!”

Hanna: “Right! I was so excited I almost forgot! Read on, Mike...”

Mike: “Okay, so the first agreement dealt with the future of the Sinai and peace between Israel and Egypt, which was to be concluded within three months. The second was a framework agreement establishing a format for the conduct of negotiations for the establishment of an autonomy regime in the West Bank and Gaza. The Israel-Egypt agreement clearly defined the future relations between the two countries, all aspects of withdrawal from the Sinai, military arrangements in the peninsula such as demilitarization and limitations, as well as the supervision mechanism. The framework agreement regarding the future of Judea, Samaria and Gaza was less clear and was later interpreted differently by Israel, Egypt, and the US. President Carter witnessed the accords which were signed by Egyptian President Sadat and Menachem Begin, who we just met.”

Hanna: “So do you feel a little more comfortable with the Camp David Accords now?”

Mike: “Yeah, I really do. I’m glad Menachem showed up to help us out! But the thing is, Hanna-“

Hanna [*interrupting*]: “The thing is?”

Mike: “The thing is that wasn’t there more fighting even after the Accords?”

Hanna: “Yeah, I thought so too. But I’m so tired of reading... let’s take a break.”

Mike: “Yeah, I’m sick of reading too. [*starts crying*.] I don’t want to read anymore! I just want to go to bed!”

[*Mother reenters behind curtain.*]

Mother: “Children, children! Get a hold of yourselves! There are more important things to be crying about.”

Mike and Hanna [*looking at each other, in unison*]: “Like what?”

Mother: “Like this. On June 5, 1982, less than six weeks after Israel's complete withdrawal from the Sinai, increased tensions between Israelis and Palestinians resulted in the Israeli jet bombings of Beirut and southern Lebanon, where the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) had a number of strongholds. By June 14 Israel's land forces (with my baby Daniel there with them) had invaded Lebanon as far as the

outskirts of Beirut, which was encircled; but the Israeli government agreed to halt the advance and begin negotiations with the PLO.

After much delay and massive Israeli shelling of West Beirut, the PLO evacuated the city under the supervision of a multinational force. Eventually, Israeli troops withdrew from West Beirut, and the Israeli army had withdrawn entirely from Lebanon by June 1985. I exhaled. I felt like for once maybe my son would be safe. But I've come to learn that breathing normally in Israel is not possible. Safety never lasts long. So the hostility continued. On December 9, 1987, rioting broke out among Palestinian Arabs living in the Israeli-occupied territories of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank and in Jerusalem. The Palestinian demonstrations and riots continued in the following years and took on the character of a mass popular rebellion (known as the intifada, or "uprising") directed against continued Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. In 1993 Israel and the PLO reached an agreement that involved mutual recognition and envisaged the gradual implementation of Palestinian self-government in the West Bank and Gaza Strip before a permanent peace settlement. That process began in 1995. It is now 1997.

My baby Daniel is not much of a baby anymore. He is still serving his country, as a retired Col. Lieutenant, and my greatest wish is that he will come home next year for his 50th birthday and the big celebration of the 50th anniversary of Israel."

[Mother exits behind curtain.]

Hanna: "Wow, Mike. That was really heavy."

Mike: "Yeah, I'm really glad we have a celebration coming up!"

Hanna [*singing*]: "Celebrate good times, COME ON! Du-nuh-nuh-nuh..."

Mike [*interrupting her outstanding performance*]: "Hanna! What are you doing! It's 4 in the morning!"

[Benjamin Netanyahu enters behind curtain.]

Benjamin Netanyahu: "Ya! I want you guys to celebrate, but keep it down a bit! I'm Benjamin Netanyahu and I have something important to say! See, by this time Israel has become a major player on the world stage. Fiftieth anniversary celebrations for Israel are taking place not just in Israel, but in the United States, Canada, Latin America, Western and Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia and Oceania too. So Israel's reach has happily extended beyond the country and into the communities around the world which make up the Diaspora. So I'm here to address all of you Jews living in the Diaspora today..."

This year we celebrate the State of Israel's 50th birthday, a landmark in our history. I believe we can be proud of our accomplishments in this half-century.

Even before the State was officially declared, we were attacked from all sides, and most military experts doubted that the new state would survive. But we have not only survived against great odds. We have performed what can only be described as a modern miracle. We have gathered millions of exiles to our land, developed a thriving economy, and attained international standing in the sciences and the arts, in technology and in agriculture. With resolve and courage we have proved again and again that we can defend ourselves against all enemies.

These achievements have convinced our neighbors of our permanence in the region. Egypt and Jordan have signed peace treaties with us, we have established relations with other Arab countries, and started a peace process with our Palestinian neighbors.

There are few sacrifices and concessions Israel is unwilling to make to achieve peace with all its neighbors. But a fundamental requirement must be satisfied: security.

This should have been self-evident. The very definition of peace includes the absence of violence and war. Terrorism and threats of violence are incompatible with the peace process.

Yet many expect Israel to withdraw from areas that are the cradle of Jewish civilization, to relinquish control over strategic assets, and to leave itself vulnerable to attack despite the absence of any credible assurance of security. This we cannot do. To treat the matter of security lightly is to abdicate our responsibilities as a government. Jews everywhere must remain united in demanding that security be an integral, indispensable component of the peace process. Only then can we achieve real peace.

Ever since the struggling days of the State's beginning, unity has been our invaluable weapon. And whenever cracks seem to appear in this bond, we prove time and again that in times of trouble or when facing a national challenge we set aside our differences and act as one people.

The bond between Israel and the Diaspora is vital to our survival. It is what gives the Jewish people strength in the present and confidence in the future.

Not every goal has been attained, not every challenge has been met. As we mark 100 years of modern Zionism and enter Israel's 50th year we must not lose sight of the purpose of Zionism: the ingathering of the Jewish people in the Jewish state.

With Israel's economy developing at an extraordinary pace and with its standard of living approaching that of the most advanced nations, there is every reason for Jews everywhere to consider Aliyah. I am certain that a majority of the Jewish people will be living in Israel by the time we celebrate the State's 60th anniversary.

We shall also widen the circle of peace to encompass all our neighbors, narrow the socio-economic gaps in our society, and resolve the differences between our religious streams.

Let us not rest on our laurels. But let us also view our magnificent achievements with pride, and feel confident that we will successfully face all challenges and overcome all obstacles.

We are one people, united forever by faith, history and a shared destiny. With best wishes for Hag Sameach from Jerusalem, Israel's eternal capital.”

[Netanyahu exits behind curtain. Ehud Barak sneaks in without Netanyahu seeing him]

Barak: “Do you think he saw me? Ugh – he always talks too long! It’s a good thing that I beat him in the 1999 elections. A lot happens while I’m in office – we came so close to peace. In June of 2000 we withdrew our military forces from southern Lebanon after being there for almost 18 years. One month later, I was at Camp David with President Clinton negotiating peace which Arafat wanted no part of. I was really generous too!

That September, Ariel Sharon decides to visit the Temple Mount causing such a *balagan* (mess)! The Palestinians were so angry that the second *Intifada* (uprising) began and the violence still continues today. Israeli soldiers were kidnapped into Lebanon by Hezbollah; other Israeli soldiers are lynched by a Palestinian mob in Ramallah...it was a mess.

At the end of that year, we gathered again for peace negotiations which ended in the election of Ariel Sharon to Prime Minister and the Inauguration of President Bush in the States. “

[Sharon enters at this point.]

Sharon: “Yeah – I really beat you in that election!”

Barak: “Well tell them what you have accomplished, not what you did to me. They are here to learn about Israel!”

Sharon: “I’ve done a lot for our country! I worked with the United States and their Mitchell Committee in May of 2001 to call for a cease fire. Our military captured a Palestinian ship filled with weapons from Iran in January of 2002.”

Barak: “And then the violence got really bad.”

Sharon: *(taking a more serious tone)* “Yes it did. During Pesach in 2002, there was a suicide bomber who killed 30 Israelis gathered for a seder at a hotel in Netanya. Then the Arab League adopted an initiative asking us to withdraw from the occupied territories. We weren’t ready to do that with so many terrorists on the loose, so I sent troops in to destroy their hideouts. That didn’t go over so well and we were blamed for the “massacre” in the town of Jenin.”

“Around this time Colin Powell came over from the United States to once again try and broker a cease-fire. The American Jewish Community gathered on Capitol Hill in Washington DC to hold a pro-Israel rally in April of 2002.”

Barak: “That was something! Did you know that there were over 100,000 people in attendance? They put it together last minute and only expected about 10,000 to show up!”

Sharon: “We felt so proud that day. That June, President Bush delivered a major address about US Policy concerning the Middle East. He talked about the Palestinians need for their own state and a reform of their leadership. Two months later, there was another bomb at a cafeteria at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem where close to 10 people were killed, 5 of whom were Americans.”

Barak: “That was awful. There has been even more violence since then. We’ll have to see what 2003 will bring – hopefully it will be peace.”

Mike: “Peace in the Middle East would be a wonderful thing after so many years of struggling.”

Hanna: “Absolutely! Wow! We’ve been through more than 50 years of Israeli history in one night!”

Mike: “I am so happy. I’m ready to take on this exam!”

Hanna: “Yeah, I’m really happy too!”

Mike: “Happy happy happy...”

Hanna: “And tiiiiired...”

Mike: “SO TIRED.”

[Hanna and Mike fall asleep on each other.]