

A Guide to

LEGENDS AMONG US

with Rabbi Benji

Foreword

This guide is designed to facilitate meaningful discussions about the powerful stories shared in the *Legends Amongst Us* podcast and video series. Each legend's section includes a brief overview of their story, along with links to the full conversation in both video and audio formats. Ideally, these conversations should be experienced from start to finish and thoughtfully processed. Additionally, short clips are available to share with your group for focused discussions.

The guide also includes discussion questions and activities, which serve as a starting point—feel free to adapt or expand them to suit your needs.

If using this resource in a larger group setting, participants can be divided into pairs or smaller groups, with each group focusing on a different legend and presenting their insights to the broader group. However, there are many ways to engage with this material—get creative and make it your own!
If you develop an activity or project inspired by these stories, we'd love to hear about it. Additionally, if you'd like to send messages of support to the families featured in the podcast, please reach out. You can share both via email at hello@rabbibenji.com.

Thank you for honoring these stories and those who shared them.

October 7

On October 7 2024, as Jews worldwide celebrated Simchat Torah, Hamas launched an unprecedented coordinated terror attack on the people of Israel. Militants breached the border with vehicles and parasails, rockets and infantry. They targeted civilians at home and large gatherings, took hostages, and committed brutal acts. Over 1,200 Israelis were killed, 240 hostages were captured and antisemitism grew the globe.

Each person experienced this differently and it is our duty to reflect on the recent past as we consider how it alters our longterm future.



What does October 7 mean to you?

Consider. Reflect. Discuss.

Rabbi Doron Perez

In Honor of Daniel Perez Z’L

On October 7 2023 Rabbi Doron Perez blessed his two sons before they ran to help on the Gaza border. Yonatan was shot and Daniel was kidnapped. 10 days later, Yonatan got married with the status of Daniel unknown. Months later Daniel was declared dead and we continue to pray for the return of his body.

Watch the **full** conversation by clicking here

Listen to the **full** conversation by clicking here

Watch a short where Rabbi Doron Perez shares how he coped here



Questions

1. How do you cope with uncertainty?
2. How does Rabbi Perez deal with loss on a day-to-day basis and what can we learn from this?
3. How do you find happiness during hard times?
4. Rabbi Perez said *“It's possible to feel immense joy and sadness at the same time”*, What do you think he means and how can we implement that in our own lives?
5. What is antifragility? What are some examples in your life where you see antifragility?
6. How do you make a decision and stick with it, without doubt, like Rabbi Perez did with Aliya?
7. What lessons can we take from tragedy?
8. What does Rabbi Perez mean when he says “*honor the pain*?”



Activities



1. Imagine you're a parent and write a message to your children expressing what's important to you that you wish for them to bring into their lives.
2. Create a memory box to honor and remember loved ones that you have lost. (This box can include photos, letters, mementos, and other items that hold significance for you.)
3. Write letters of gratitude to someone you love, focusing on happy memories and the positive impact those individuals have had on your life.

Michal Santhouse

In honor of Moshe and Eliad Z’L

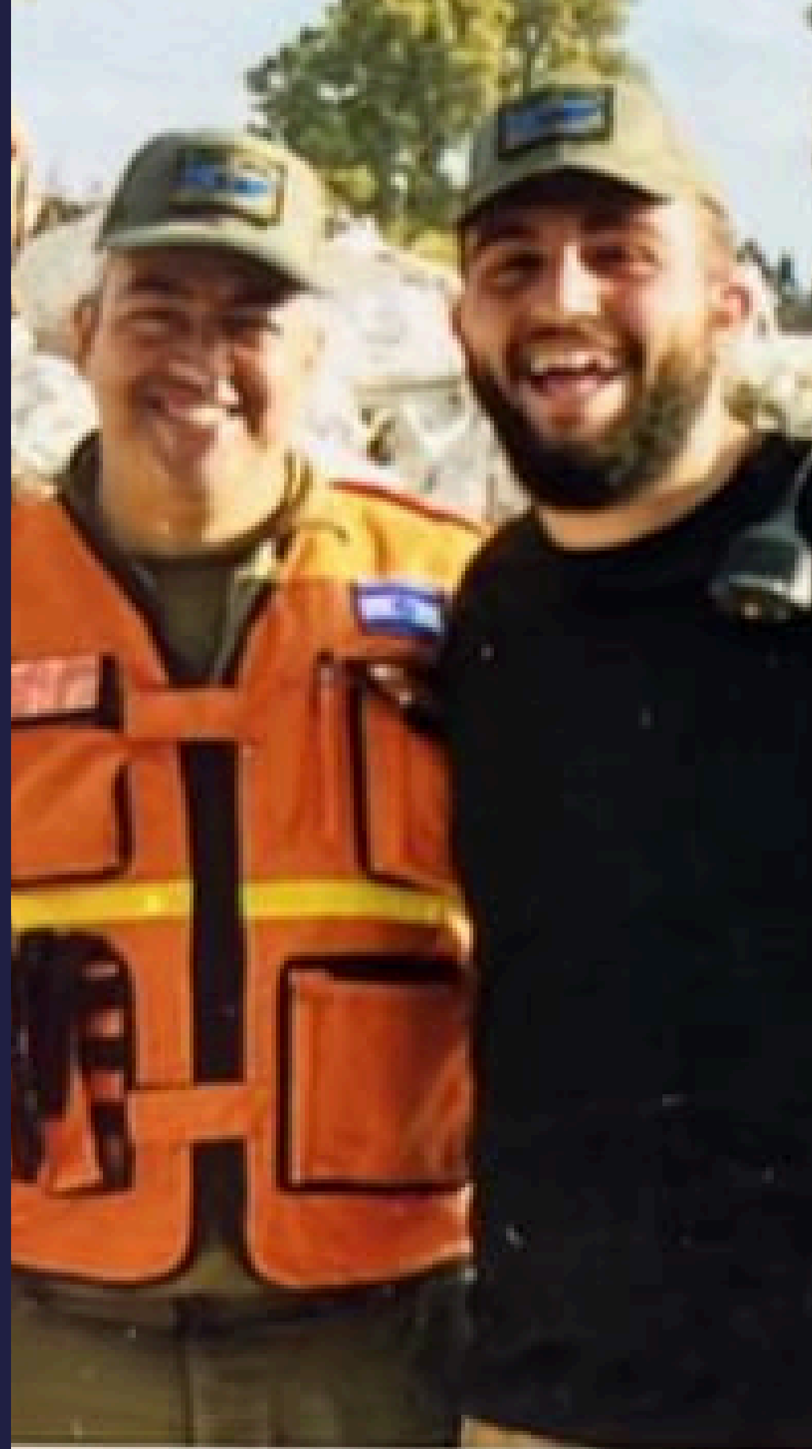
Moshe and his son Eliad were running to the municipality to open bomb shelters, in an attempt to protect anyone they could, when they were outnumbered by terrorists. Rabbi Benji sat down with their sister and aunt, Michal Santhouse, to discuss the legacy of these heroes who saved hundreds of people.

Watch the **full** conversation by clicking here

Listen to the **full** conversation by clicking here

Watch a short of Michal recalling learning of her family's murder here

Watch a short of Michal sharing good her nephew brought to the world here



Questions



1. If you weren’t in school and were instead volunteering, what kind of work would you choose to do?
2. What can we learn from Eliad, who encouraged officials in the pilot army unit to teach about the importance of equality and treating everyone the same?
3. Just as Michal and her family shared Eliad’s happiness, what emotions can you share with your friends and family to support each other?
4. Since not everyone can serve in the army, how can you contribute to helping the Jewish people, as Moshe did?
5. Why is it important to treat people with fewer opportunities than you fairly, while still encouraging them to work for what they earn?
6. What can we learn about respect from Moshe, whether he was helping the poor or the elderly?
7. How are you making the most of each day?
8. How can you show leadership in your community, even if you're not in a formal position of authority?

Activities



1. Create a list of goals you want to achieve in life, emphasizing the importance of making every day count.
2. As a class, build a gratitude bulletin board where each day, you can add a note about something you're thankful for in your life.
3. Reflect on the impact of losing loved ones, finding meaning in how their memory has shaped your perspective and personal growth.

Ambassador Yechiel Leiter

In honor of Moshe Leiter Z’L

Dr. Yechiel Leiter, Israel's Ambassador to the U.S., lost his son and best friend, Moshe Leiter. A father of six, Moshe was devoted to volunteer work and on track to becoming a doctor. Yechiel reflects on Moshe's dedication, values, and the lasting impact of his sacrifice on their family and the nation.

Watch the **full** conversation by clicking here

Listen to the **full** conversation by clicking here

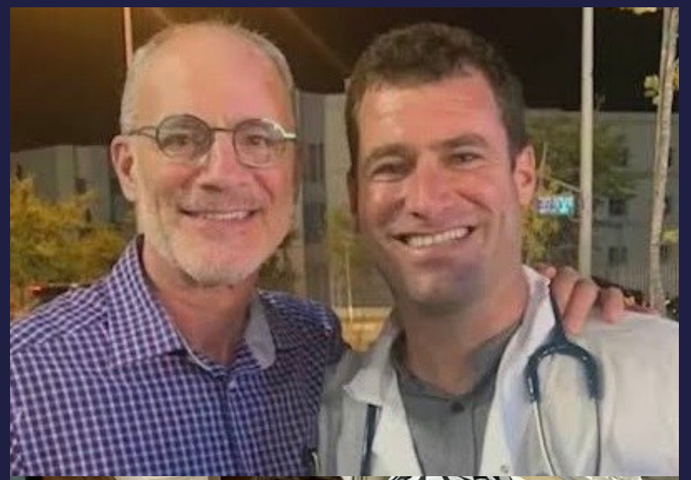
Watch a short of Yechiel, on his final moments with his son here

Watch a short of Yechiel drawing a parallel between Moshe's sacrifice and the Maccabees here



Questions

1. What do you think the moment of Moshe pinching his father's cheek symbolizes?
2. What do you prioritize in your life, and what's something you wish you made more time for, like Moshe did?
3. Who are the modern-day Maccabees you admire or know of?
4. What values do you think society has overlooked or forgotten since the start of this war?
5. How can you express your Jewish pride without succumbing to fear or victimization by others?
6. What can we learn from Moshe about the art of peacemaking?
7. Moshe said, "Know who you are, know where your friends are, and know where your enemies are." How can this advice be applied to your everyday life?
8. How can we better support those dealing with loss or grief, just as Moshe provided guidance in times of hardship?





Activities



1. Research and present stories about modern-day heroes (Maccabees) who have shown bravery and resilience.
2. Organize a community service projects as an emulation of Moshe.
3. Write a letter to your parents expressing appreciation, love, and any unspoken words.

Edna Zussman

In honor of Ben Zussman Z’L

Edna Zussman reflects on the deep pain of losing her grandson, 22-year-old Ben Zussman, shortly after the death of her nephew, Yosef Guedalia. She shares the emotional struggle of hearing about his passing and the lasting impact it left on her. Edna also emphasizes the importance of honoring the soldiers.

Watch the **full** conversation by clicking here

Listen to the **full** conversation by clicking here

Watch a short where Edna reflects on loss and sacrifice here

Watch a short where Edna speaks on the moment she found out about the death of her grandson here



Questions

1. Why do you think it was significant for Edna to stand with strangers at the funeral, even though she didn’t know them?
2. How often do you connect with your grandparents, and do you wish you made more time for them?
3. How has a personal loss shaped your perspective on life and relationships?
4. When faced with grief, what practices or actions help you process and find comfort?
5. In what ways can you strengthen your relationship with your parents?"
6. How do you remember and honor the lives of those you've lost?
7. If you could have one more conversation with someone you've lost, what would you say?
8. How do you want to be remembered by future generations?



Activities



1. Write a page about the person you're named after or a grandparent you admire, then present it to them as a tribute to their connection with you.
2. Keep a gratitude journal for a week, focusing on the appreciation you have for your parents and family.
3. Create a piece of art, poem, or song dedicated to your family, reflecting the bond you share with them.

Sarit Zussman

In honor of Ben Zussman Z’L

Sarit Zussman, the mother of Ben, became a symbol of strength after his death, instantly pulling her family together instead of succumbing to despair. She reflects on her deep relationship with Ben, her approach to finding real joy, and how she copes with the loss of a loved one.

Watch the **full** conversation by clicking here

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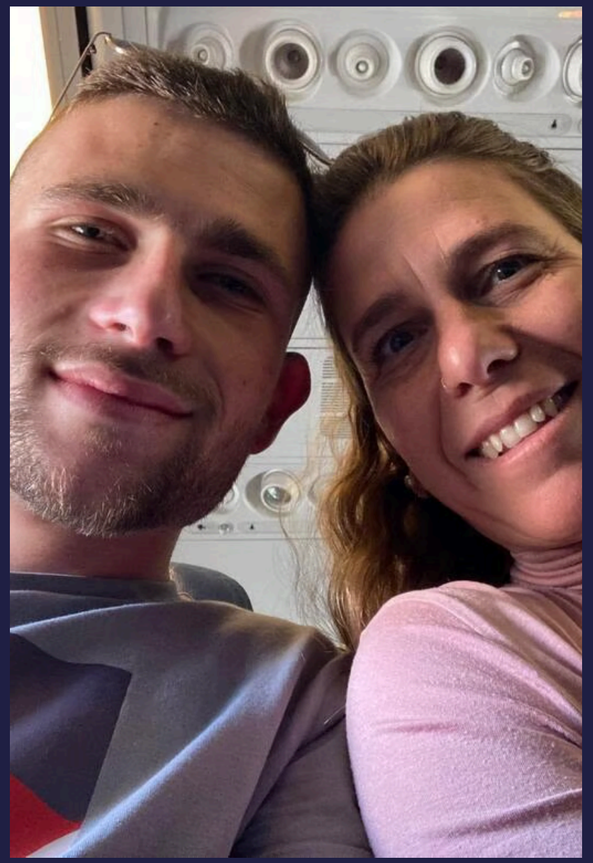
Watch a short where Sarit reflects on the idea of choosing life here

Watch a short where Sarit shares how she stays connected to her son after his loss here



Questions

1. How do you honor the memory of someone who has passed, whether a family member, friend, or mentor?
2. What insights can we gain about the meaning of life from contemplating death?
3. What does Sarit mean when she says, “Death is part of life”?
4. Sarit suggests that choosing happiness is simple, but when facing personal struggles, how do you maintain strength and positivity?
5. What is your relationship like with your parents? Are you close, and how could it be strengthened?
6. How do you connect to your Jewish roots and values in your daily life?
7. How do you show respect for others, even when you disagree or face differences?
8. How do you cope with loss and use it to deepen your understanding of life’s purpose?



Activities



1. Write a letter addressed to those who love and support you showing your gratitude for them.
2. Identify and write down 5 meaningful ways you embrace life and find joy, rather than just getting by.
3. Create a box filled with positive notes for yourself, to read when you’re facing tough times.

Tzvi Zussman

In honor of Ben Zussman Z’L

Tzvi Zussman reflects on his close relationship with his son Ben, the honesty they shared, and how he copes with the deep loss. He explains how Ben’s memory continues to inspire and guide him and his family through their grief.

Watch the **full** conversation by clicking here

Listen to the **full** conversation by clicking here

Watch a short where Tzvi reflects on Ben’s final letter here

Watch a short where Tzvi speaks on fighting for good against evil here



Questions

1. Do you look up to your siblings the way Boaz admires Ben? Why or why not?
2. Have you ever pushed yourself beyond your limits to achieve something you deeply wanted? When and why?
3. If you had to write a letter to your family from the front lines, what would you say?
4. Is there a cause you believe in so deeply that you would be willing to give your life for it? If so, what is it and why?
5. How do you distinguish between true evil and something that only appears to be?
6. Do you share such a deep bond with your parents that they know every story about you? Would anything about your life truly surprise them?
7. How would you navigate being the only religious person in a particular setting?
8. Have you ever had to stand up for what you believe in, even when it meant standing alone? What gave you the strength to do it?



Activities



1. Write about shared experiences with your siblings or family, highlighting adventures, challenges, and lessons learned.
2. Create a scrapbook filled with photos, stories, and significant memories of your family.
3. Interview your family members about their favorite memories together, and compile their responses into a short video tribute.

Zussman Family

1. What recurring themes can we identify in the way the Zussman family responded to their heartbreaking news?
2. How can we learn about strength and resilience from the Zussman family's actions and reactions?
3. What lessons about Jewish pride can we take from the Zussman family's story?
4. In what ways can we combat evil, as discussed by the Zussman family?
5. How do you define a hero, and what qualities make someone a hero in your eyes?
6. What message would you share with the Jewish world after learning about the Zussman family's experiences?
7. How did the Zussman family demonstrate unity and support in the face of tragedy?
8. What role does faith play in how the Zussmans navigated their hardships?



Rabbi Leo Dee

In honor of Lucy, Maia and Rina Dee Z’L

During Passover, Rabbi Leo Dee took a different route with his three children, while his wife and two daughters were in another car. Terrorists tragically killed his family, and Rabbi Dee continues to honor them by inspiring hope and strength in others.

Watch the **full** conversation by clicking here

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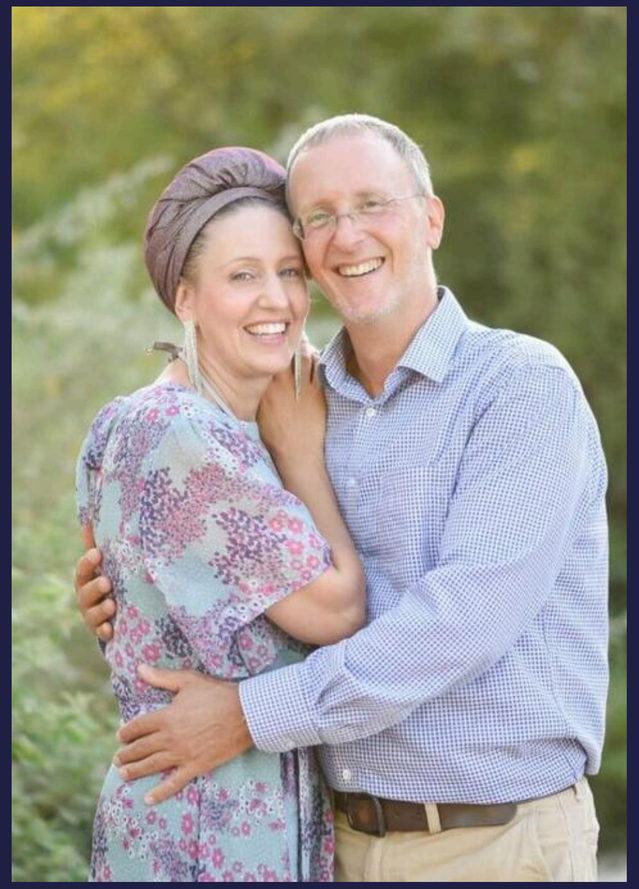
Watch Rabbi Leo Dee urge action in the war effort here

Watch Rabbi Leo Dee discuss countering misinformation and sharing the truth here



Questions

1. How did Rabbi Leo Dee cope with his grief and find ways to heal after his loss?
2. Rabbi Dee talks about blood libels—can you think of any historical examples of blood libels you've learned about?
3. Why do you think Rabbi Dee didn't cry "as much as people might expect" in response to his loss?
4. What are some different ways people cope with grief, and what might these methods say about their personality or values?
5. How can we honor those who have been victims of terror or violence?
6. How can shared grief unite people and create a sense of collective support?
7. What role does mourning play in the healing process, and why is it important?
8. How can we transform our grief into motivation for positive change in the world?



Activities



1. Write a heartfelt message of strength and support to someone grieving the loss of a loved one.
2. Create an uplifting video that offers words of encouragement for those serving or going through difficult times.
3. Reflect on a challenging experience you've faced and write about the healing methods that helped you through it.

We are grateful to our partners: Martine and Stanley Fleishman, the Welcher Family, and United—an initiative of the Ministry of Diaspora Affairs and Combatting Antisemitism—for their meaningful partnership and support.

UnitEd

Ministry for Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism