

# ISRAEL STORY'S MIXTAPE

## THE STORIES BEHIND ISRAEL'S ULTIMATE PLAYLIST

### EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE



Photo Courtesy Israel Story

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

### USING ISRAEL STORY MIXTAPE IN THE CLASSROOM

#### EPISODE 2

*Background and Summary Songs*  
*Speaker/Personality Description and Bios*  
*Themes*  
*Discussion Questions*  
*Recommended Activities*  
*Resources*  
*Songbook— heb/eng/transliteration*

#### ACCESS TO ISRAEL STORY MIXTAPE EPISODE 2

<https://israelstory.org/episode/37-mixtape-part-ii-iron-gold/>

## INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

Music and song play a central role in Israel's culture. From the early pioneers, who adapted their songs to their new homeland, to the contemporary sound and verse of today's poets and lyricists—The playlist evolves to reflect the changing history of Israel.

As educators, we recognize the power of music. These materials harness that power to inspire connections to the land and people of Israel through their music. Israeli music has the power to connect us.

Mixtape, an Israel Story podcast series, provides an in-depth exploration of Israel's ultimate playlist. This four-part musical journey takes us through anthems, songs of yearning and songs of war, and peace, showcasing the stories behind some of Israel's most iconic tunes. Mixtape offers a multimedia experience, using sound (podcast), visual (YouTube videos), written text, and an online presence.

We offer this educational guide to support educators as they employ Israel Story Mixtape as a tool for connecting to Israel's accomplishments and complexities.

## HOW TO USE MIXTAPE

Educators have been using podcasts as a classroom tool for more than a decade—but as their popularity continues to grow, educators are finding new ways to bring them into the classroom.

Podcasts bring stories to life, exposing us to different narratives and opinions, enriching our knowledge and providing an opportunity for critical inquiry.

There are many ways to explore the rich content that Mixtape offers. Each episode can be discussed in one session or broken into several lessons, depending on time and audience. Learners can listen on their own or together, during class. Educators can facilitate discussions on key issues, assign individual exploration or implement activities.

To help you plan lessons, we include:

- Background and Summary Songs
- Speaker / Personality Description and Bios
- Themes
- Discussion Questions
- Recommended Activities
- Resources
- Songbook—heb/eng/transliteration

We encourage you to put your own spin on lessons using these materials as a foundational source.

In this four-part miniseries, Mixtape, Israel Story sets out to explore Israeli society through the stories behind some of the country's most iconic tunes.

*“When it comes to Israel, everything is complicated. Politics are complicated, religion is complicated, democracy is complicated, the conflict is complicated. Even the complications are complicated... But there is (seemingly) one island within Israeli society that escapes complexity, one thing that brings us together more than it divides us: Israeli music. Or so, at least, we thought.”*

—Mishy Harmon, Israel Story Host

## EPISODE 2 | IRON AND GOLD

(44:26 min)

We continue our musical journey through the intricacies of Israeli society. This time we explore a song that, ever since the dramatic events in 1967, has become the soundtrack of the country: “Jerusalem of Gold.”

June 5, 1967, is burned into memory as the start of the [Six-Day War](#). The well known song “Yerushalayim Shel Zahav” (“Jerusalem of Gold”) was composed and performed shortly before the war and became an instant success. It hit a hopeful chord during a period of tension and uncertainty leading up to the war. The song became even more poignant after the Six-Day War with the capture of the Old City. At that point in time, Naomi Shemer added an additional verse to reflect the new reality.

In 1968, Uri Avnery, an up-and-coming left-wing politician, suggested replacing Israel’s national anthem “Hatikvah” with “Yerushalayim Shel Zahav.” A surprising suggestion given the connection between the song and the Six-Day War.

While Avnery’s motion never made it to the Knesset floor, “Yerushalayim Shel Zahav” (“Jerusalem of Gold”) has indeed become an anthem of sorts. It is arguably the most recognizable and beloved Israeli tune, to the point that it is repeatedly voted the most important song in the country’s history.

In this episode, Israel Story host Mishy Harman describes an iconic song that built the musical careers of two modern-day Israeli prophets—one of hope and optimism, the other of gloom and despair. Even today, more than half-a-century after June 1967, Naomi Shemer and Meir Ariel represent two different Israels: Israel as ideal that hopes and yearns, and Israel as real that is tough and pained. Less a statement about who we are, right or left, but rather a statement about who we want to be—pragmatists or dreamers.

*Note: Be mindful of your audience, this episode includes several instances of adult language. The episode can be divided into two segments.*

### **PART 1: INTRODUCTION** (00:00-6:27)

Journalist Uri Avnery suggests replacing “Hatikvah.”

### **PART 2: JERUSALEM OF GOLD** (6:28-22:24)

How Naomi Shemer’s “Yerushalayim Shel Zahav” (“Jerusalem of Gold”) becomes an anthem in 1967 during and after the Six-Day War.

### **PART 3: JERUSALEM OF IRON** (22:25-35:53)

Meir Ariel’s “Yerushalayim Shel Barzel” (“Jerusalem of Iron”) represents a different perspective of the same war.

## **PART 4: THE ORIGINAL RECORDING OF JERUSALEM OF GOLD (39:10-44:26)**

The first live recording of “Jerusalem of Gold” during the 1967 music festival when it was performed for the first time.

### **SONGS**

- “Yerushalayim Shel Zahav” (“Jerusalem of Gold”)—Naomi Shemer
- “Yerushalayim Shel Barzel” (“Jerusalem of Iron”)—Meir Ariel, Naomi Shemer

### **THEMES**

#### **1. THE SIX-DAY WAR**

The Six-Day War took place in June 1967, and was the third of the Arab-Israeli wars. Israel’s decisive victory included the capture of the Sinai Peninsula, Gaza Strip, West Bank, Old City of Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights. The status of these territories subsequently became a major point of contention in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

*“In the brief history of the State of Israel, the Six-Day War constitutes a major turning point. This swift and total victory saved the Zionist entity from destruction, ensured its physical existence, and disillusioned those of her enemies who had hoped that the Jewish State was just a passing phenomenon. On the other hand, these densely-populated territories regarded as “liberated” by some Israelis and as “occupied” by others, created a whole series of insurmountable problems—political, social, economic, moral and religious—unresolved to this day. The future of the State of Israel, its character and its place among nations, now depends on their solution.” (from A Historical Atlas of the Jewish People, published by Schocken Books)*

#### **2. JERUSALEM**

*“Ten measures of beauty were bestowed upon the world; nine were taken by Jerusalem and one by the rest of the world.” (Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Kiddushin 49:2)*

*“Jerusalem, the capital of Israel, is located in the heart of the country, nestled among the Judean Hills. The city’s ancient stones, imbued with millennia of history, and its numerous historical sites, shrines and places of worship attest to its meaning for Jews, Christians and Muslims.” (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs)*

Israeli law ensures that all religious groups have access to and control over their own holy sites. And as described in a BBC News article: The territorial gains of the Six-Day War in 1967 extended the city’s municipal boundaries, established in 1948, putting both East and West Jerusalem under its sovereignty and civil law. Since Israel’s annexation of East Jerusalem in 1980, the city’s status remains disputed and became a major sticking point—Israel calling it the unified capital, while Palestinians claim East Jerusalem will one day be the capital of their independent state.

#### **3. DIFFERENT NARRATIVES—DREAMERS AND PRAGMATISTS**

While most American Jewish educators tended to be more closely connected to the mythical Israel rather than to the real Israel, today there has been a noticeable shift in Israel Education

and a more balanced and honest approach by presenting different narratives of the same story.

*“Critical thinking about Israel, we found, is not incompatible with positive engagement with Israel. In schools that offer different, more critical perspectives on the history and development of modern Israel, especially on the upper school level, students scored no lower in their sense of connection to Israel. Students can be aware of the challenges facing the Jewish State and still be committed to Israel’s wellbeing and importance in their own lives.”*

*(Hearts and Minds: Israel in North American Jewish Day Schools, from The Avi Chai Foundation)*

## **SPEAKERS**



*Photo Courtesy Wiki Commons*

### **URI AVNERY**

An Israeli writer, politician, and founder of the Gush Shalom movement. A teenage member of the Irgun (Jewish underground military organization, based on revisionist Zionism, active between 1931-1948), Avnery sat for two terms in the Knesset from 1965 to 1974 and from 1979 to 1981. He was also the owner of the news magazine HaOlam HaZeh (“This World”) from 1950 until it closed in 1993.



*Photo Courtesy Wiki Commons*

### **RIVKA MICHAELI**

Still in the limelight at 80, Michaeli is an Israeli actress, comedian, entertainer, radio and television hostess. Her career spans six decades.



*Photo Courtesy Wiki Commons*

### **SHULI NATAN**

Israeli singer who is considered to be the Israeli “Joan Baez” due to her repertoire and the quality of her voice.

**TIRTZA ARIEL** (*Meir Ariel’s widow*)

**SHACHAR ARIEL** (*Meir Ariel’s son*)

**LELY SHEMER** (*Naomi Shemer’s daughter*)

**MOTI ZE’IRA** (*Naomi Shemer’s biographer*)

## PERSONALITIES



Photo Courtesy Wiki Commons

### NAOMI SHEMER

“First Lady of Israeli Song,” songwriter, composer, and winner of the Israel Prize, Shemer remains one of the most important Hebrew songwriters. Any of the hundreds of songs she wrote during the founding of the state formed the very bedrock of Israeli culture.

[See full bio on the Jewish Women’s Archive website.](#)



Photo Courtesy Wiki Commons

### MEIR ARIEL

Singer-songwriter known as a “man of words” for his poetic use of the Hebrew language in his lyrics. His influences included Hebrew scripture and Hebrew poetry as well as American singer-songwriters such as Bob Dylan. Ariel’s fame and recognition is largely posthumous. Ariel passed away at the age of 57 in 1999. Since then, almost annually there has been a musical performance held in his honor. The Ariel Salute has attracted stellar lineups and large crowds across Israel and at his former home, Kibbutz Mishmarot, and various other venues.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How and why is the Six-Day War still significant in Israel today? Was there a lasting impact? What was it?
- Why do you think Jerusalem is so important to so many people? How do you feel about Jerusalem? Is it also important for you? How?
- How do the two songs paint different pictures of Jerusalem and the Six-Day War?
- Naomi Shemer and Meir Ariel represent two different Israels: There’s the idealized one that hopes and yearns, and the realist one that says “no, things in these parts are tough and painful.” They represent two narratives of the same story.
  - Are the two narratives complementing or conflicting?
  - Do you have a preference for one or the other?
- Some call “Jerusalem of Gold” the unofficial anthem of Israel. Do you think this song should replace “Hatikvah”? Explain.

## RECOMMENDED ACTIVITIES

1. Ask learners to create a collage/drawing/artform of the two “Jeruselems” depicted in the two songs.
2. Facilitate a comparison of the two songs: What is similar? What is different? Pay special attention to the “conversation” Meir Ariel has with Naomi Shemer throughout the song, but especially in the last refrain. What is his final message to the listeners?
3. Dual Narrative: Have learners write a short story from two different perspectives using two different narrators. This can be a simple story from their everyday lives, an imaginary situation, or anything else that presents an opportunity to explore this creative writing technique. Have learners present their stories and explain their process and what they have learned from the experience.