



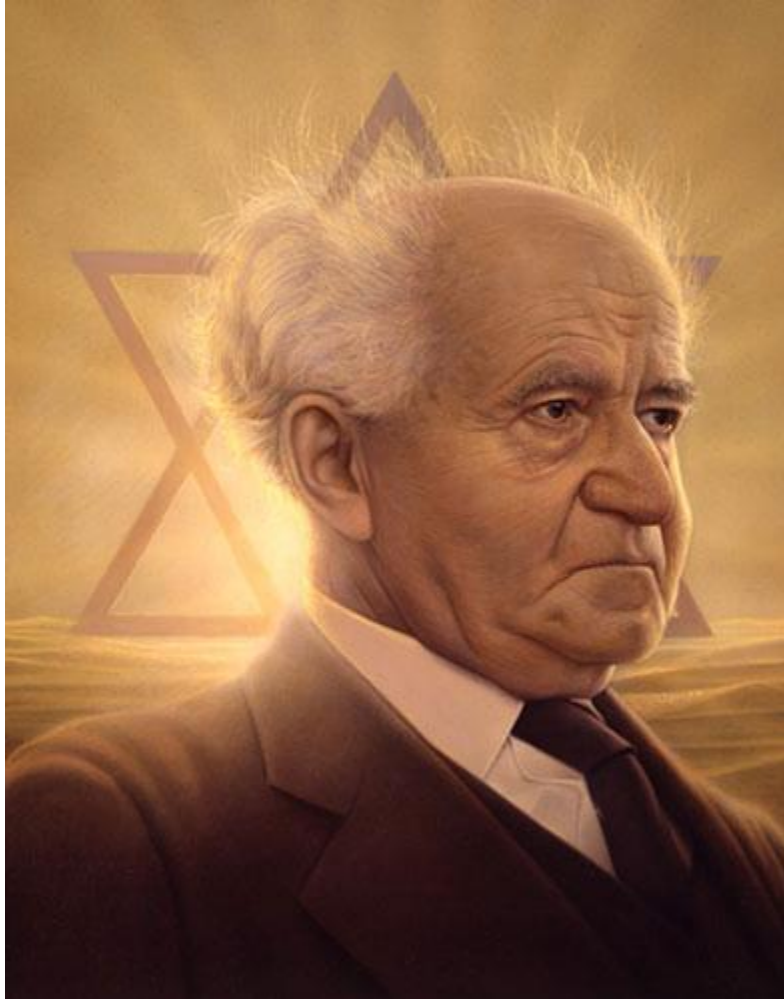
IMPORTANT
PEOPLE IN
ISRAEL'S HISTORY

אישים בציונות
ובהסטוריה של
ישראל

DAVID BEN GURION

1886-1973

David Ben Gurion was the first Prime Minister of the state of Israel (and is known as its primary founder).



David Ben Gurion was born as David Grun in Plonsk, Poland to a Zionist family, was educated in a Hebrew school that his father established and led a youth movement by the time he was a teenager. By the age of 18, he became a Hebrew school teacher and formed a Zionist group called Po'aley Zion.

He arrived in Israel in 1906 and quickly became involved in agricultural work, helping to establish the Jewish defense group called "Hashomer".

He was an activist who led the struggle to establish the state of Israel, and in May 14th, 1948, he became Israel's first Prime Minister and Defense Minister, proclaiming the famous Declaration of Independence. He worked tirelessly, aiming to develop the country and its citizens. He was responsible for bringing new immigrants to Israel, helped build the state institutions, lead the first War of Independence and called for pioneering settlement in different areas, especially the Negev. Making the Negev bloom was a huge priority for him and something that he saw as a major contribution to the state of Israel.

In 1953, David Ben Gurion left the government and retired to Kibbutz Sde Boker in the Negev. Later, in 1955 he returned as the Minister of Defense and a re-elected Prime Minister.

In 1963, Ben Gurion retired from the government, but remained politically active. He passed away in 1973. His home in Sde Boker is a museum today.

The first Prime Minister is commemorated in many different ways. Israel's international airport is named in his honour, one of Israel's major universities is named after him, many streets and schools are also named after him as well as a desert research centre located near his home is in his name. His portrait appears on a money bill issued by the bank of Israel.

Theodor Herzl

1860 - 1904

Best known as the visionary of the State of Israel (), the father of modern political Zionism and the founder of the World Zionist Organization.



Theodor Herzl, born Binyamin Ze'ev Herzl, in Budapest Hungary, to a German speaking family who were assimilated Jews. He had a secular education, earned a Doctorate of Law and became a playwright and journalist while living in Vienna.

As a journalist, Herzl was sent to be the Paris correspondent covering the Dreyfus trial in Paris. The trial was about a French Jewish army captain who was falsely convicted of spying for Germany. The anti Semitism portrayed at the trial and the chanting of "Death to the Jews" that Herzl witnessed lead him to believe that the Jews must create their own state and the only solution for the Jews would be mass immigration to a land they would call their own.

Herzl worked tirelessly to try and make this conclusion a reality. He collected funds to create the World Zionist Organization and gathered Jews at the World Zionist Congress. He worked to appeal to the Jewish masses, wealthy Jews and non Jews through the convening of 6 Congresses, his writings (of which the most famous are his books "The Jewish State" and "Old New Land") and travels.

At the sixth World Zionist Congress, Herzl brought forward the British offer that Uganda could be a temporary place of refuge for the Jews. The proposal was declined and rejected by the movement.

Herzl died in 1904 of Pneumonia and did not live to see the birth of the State of Israel. His remains were brought to Israel and buried on Mount Herzl (named after him) in Jerusalem.

Many neighbourhoods, schools and streets are named after him. The first Hebrew school in Tel Aviv was named Herzeliya and a town by an identical name is named in his honour.

His famous saying – “If you will – it is not a fairytale” (–) – became the motto of the Zionist movement and is famous to this day.

Eliezer Ben Yehuda

1858-1922

Eliezer Ben Yehuda – was born Eliezer Yitzhak Pearlman in the Lithuanian village of Luzhky. He attended the Cheder (Hebrew School), and studied Hebrew, Torah, Mishnah and Talmud. His family wanted him to become a rabbi. He was sent to a Yeshiva and later was exposed to different secular writings as well. He exchanged his religious studies for secular ones and after graduation was introduced to the movement of Zionism.

Eliezer believed that Hebrew, the language of Jews, must become a spoken language and not just a written one. He became convinced that the Jews must return to their land and speak their own language.

He decided to act on these ideas and left home in 1878, first to go to Paris to study medicine so that he would be able to help the Jewish community in Palestine. He became sick in Paris and was unable to graduate. He arrived at Palestine in 1881, settled in Jerusalem and began teaching there. He was motivated by the plan to revive the Hebrew language and replace the Yiddish that was spoken by all Jews who made Aliyah and maintained that the language will live only if revived and spoken daily. In those days, Hebrew was only used for religious practices and many considered him insane and inappropriate because of his ideas.

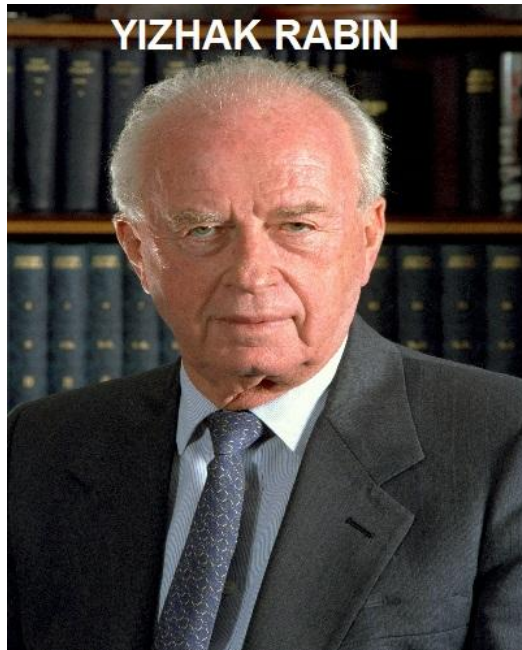
Eliezer decided to speak only Hebrew at home and to others and raised his son, Ben-Zion while speaking entirely and only Hebrew to him. He refused to let his son or wife hear or speak anything but Hebrew. He was the editor of several Hebrew language newspapers and when he could not find the Hebrew words he needed, he decided to invent them himself. He wrote the first modern Hebrew dictionary and became known as the reviver of the Hebrew language ().

Ben Yehuda died of tuberculosis at the age of 64 and was buried on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem. His home became a museum and a study centre and many streets and schools are named after him.



IZHAK RABIN

1922 – 1995



Itzhak Rabin, was born in Tel Aviv – Yafo, was an Israeli statesman and soldier who, as prime minister led Israel in the peace process with its Palestinian and Arab neighbours. He was chief of staff of Israel's armed forces during the Six day War (June 1967).

Rabin graduated from Kadourie Agricultural School in Kfar Tabor and joined the Palmach, the Jewish Defense Forces' commando unit. During the War of Independence (1948–49), he directed the defense of Jerusalem. He graduated (1953) from the British staff college, became chief of staff in January 1964, and was one of Israel's leaders in the Six Day War, where Israel won against its enemies.

In 1968, upon retiring from the army,, Rabin became Israel's ambassador to the USA where he forged a close relationship with U.S. leaders.

Returning to Israel in March 1973, Rabin became active in Israeli politics. He was elected to the Knesset as a member of the Labour Party in December and joined Prime Minister Meir's cabinet as minister of labour in March 1974. After Meir resigned in April 1974, Rabin assumed leadership of the party and became Israel's fifth (and first native-born) prime minister in June. As Israel's leader he indicated his willingness to negotiate cease-fire with Syria. Rabin was forced to call a general election for May 1977, and stepped down as leader of the Labour Party.

Rabin served as defense minister from 1984 to 1990.

In February 1992, he again became prime minister.

In October 1994 Rabin and King Hussein of Jordan, signed a full peace treaty between their two countries. He received a Nobel Peace Prize that year together with Shimon Peres (his foreign minister) and Yasir Arafat, the PLO chairman.

While attending a peace rally in November 1995, Rabin was assassinated by a Jewish extremist. His funeral was attended by many world leaders.

He was buried in Mount Herzl. The square, where he was assassinated was renamed Kikar Rabin (Rabin's square) in his memory.

ILAN RAMON

1954-2003



Ilan Ramon, born Ilan Wolfemann on June 20, 1954 in Ramat Gan, Israel. Ramon grew up in a secular Jewish family in Be'er Sheva, to European parents. His father's family escaped the Holocaust and his mother was a Holocaust survivor..

Ramon joined the Israeli Air Force in 1974. In 1981, flying an F-16 plane. He participated in Operation Opera which was a surprise Israeli air strike against the Iraqi nuclear reactor. Ramon attended Tel Aviv University, receiving a degree in electronics and computer engineering. After completing his education, he returned to the Air Force, reaching the rank of colonel in 1994. Israel started to develop its space program. The Israeli Space Agency (ISA) launched its first satellite

In late January 2003, as he was making his final preparations for his 16-day excursion on Columbia, Ramon decided he was going to represent Israelis and Jews while he was in space. He approached NASA about receiving special kosher meals while in space. He asked rabbis about intricacies of keeping the Sabbath in space, as days are only 90 minutes long in orbit.

He also brought a miniature Torah given to him by a Holocaust survivor from Bergen-Belsen, along with a mezuzah and a book of Psalms. While aboard Columbia,

On February 1, 2003, after 16 days in orbit, the crew from Columbia was returning to Earth, when the shuttle exploded during re-entry over Texas, killing all eight members of the crew, including Ramon.

Ramon was posthumously awarded the Congressional Space Medal of Honor. He is the only non-U.S. citizen recipient ever to receive that honor.

Ramon left behind his wife Rona and their four children, who were in Florida at the time of the accident. His eldest son, Asaf Ramon, died on September 13, 2009, aged 21, during a routine training flight while piloting his F-16A, 3 months after graduating from the IAF flight school as the top cadet in his class.

HARAV AVRHAM YITZCHAK HAKOHEN KOOK 1865 – 1935



Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Kook was the first Chief Rabbi of Israel, a Talmudic genius, a communal leader, a great visionary, a fighter for social justice, a poet and—most of all—a mystic.

Born in Grica, Latvia, to a family that belonged to the Hassidic movement. He studied in the Volozhin Yeshiva and became close to the head of the Yeshiva, a famous rabbi by the name of Rav Naftali Berlin. He entered his first rabbinical position at the age of 23.

He made Aliyah in 1904 and assumed the rabbinical post in Jaffa, which included responsibilities for the settlements in the area. He worked to introduce Torah and Jewish law to everyone.

He was in Europe when WW one erupted and was forced to remain there. He was involved in activities at the time which led to the Balfour Declaration.

When he returned to Israel, he was appointed as the Rav of Jerusalem and then became the first chief rabbi of Israel (although Israel was not officially a state yet). He was a man of Halakha (Jewish law) and drew many religious and non religious people to him. He was one of the most influential and celebrated rabbis of the twentieth century. He was interested in outreach and cooperation between different groups and types of Jews. He engaged in joint projects and continued to write and teach Jewish law and thought.

His authority and influence continue to this day.