

In this unit, you will learn about the heroic story of Menahem Kalmanson - recipient of the 2024 Israel Prize in the field of heroism and rescue.

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Please note that this unit covers sensitive topics that may not be appropriate for all students. It is important to preview the unit carefully and consider your students' individual needs and backgrounds before using it.

* Indicates required question

1. Name: *

Learn Vocabulary

Before you read the text learn this [vocabulary](#) - [match game](#).

1. Civilian - אזרחי / مدني
2. Bravery - אומץ לב / شجاعة
3. Tragically - באופן טרגי / بشكل مأساوي
4. Excerpts - קטעים / مقتطفات
5. Echoed - הדדה / ردد
6. Dispute - מחלוקת / نزاع
7. Endangered - סיכון / عرض للخطر
8. Brotherliness - אחווה / أخوة
9. Mutual - הדדי / متبادل
10. Humility - ענווה / تواضع

On October 7, 2023, when Israel was unexpectedly attacked, Menachem Kalmanson took the initiative to travel independently with his brother Elhanan and nephew Itiel to the Gaza border area. Their goal was to save civilian lives. Together, they managed to rescue approximately one hundred residents of Kibbutz Be'eri. Tragically, during the rescue operation, Menahem's brother, Elhanan, was fatally wounded in a terrorist attack. Image by [Ministry of Education](#)



Civilian Heroes: The 2024 Israel Prize for Bravery During Crisis

Menahem Kalmanson, a member of the heroic "Elhanan Team," was honored at the Israel Prize ceremony for his bravery in rescuing over 100 people from Kibbutz Be'eri during the October 7th attack. Tragically, his brother, Elhanan, lost his life in the battle after 16 hours of fighting. The following are excerpts from Kalmanson's moving speech:

"This event answers the question "What is our purpose here?", a question that echoed throughout the past year as division and dispute raged in the country and threatened to tear us apart from within. The question "Are we still brothers?" continued to echo until the sirens sounded on Simchat Torah and our enemies came out to attack and destroy us.

"On Shabbat afternoon my older brother Elhanan, whose absence I deeply feel at this moment, called my nephew Itiel and me to go with him to the south. Despite the risk and fear, he chose to go in time and time again. We didn't question our actions; our sole focus was that 'We must find our people'. In the middle of the night we were already very tired but we couldn't stop, as Itiel said "When you know your brother is in danger you do not really have a choice."

"When we got to the home of the Meir family in Be'eri, Michal refused to open the protected room door (Mamad). She begged from behind the door "Speak so that I can hear your Hebrew" and she didn't open the door until I cried "Shma Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad" and only then the door opened. I admit, it wasn't a prayer it was a cry: I'm a Jew, I'm here for you, please open the door." This cry for unity, echoed around the region that day as thousands of soldiers went out of a sense of deep responsibility and endangered their lives for their brothers. Others who also helped felt the same sense of brotherliness and mutual fate."

"Elchanan was aware of our nation's challenges and weaknesses and still chose to go into the danger because he believed that our people deserve this. In the last few months as disagreement arose again, we met families from diverse backgrounds. Despite differing views, everyone shared concerns for the country, lives, and hostages. We listened, debated, connected and felt love which, led us to humility. Like all family bonds, it's hard to explain what makes your brother so special and why you cannot replace him, as he is a brother."

Kalmanson concluded the speech by saying that "As the blood of our brothers cries out from the ground, we cannot continue to fight without seeing the good in this nation, for we are our brother's keeper."

Text is based on [this site](#) and is used for educational purposes only.

[Listen to the speech in Hebrew](#) and answer the questions below.

2. **1. What was Menahem Kalmanson's role in the October 7th attack? *** 10 points

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ A. He was a soldier fighting alongside the Israeli army.
- ☐ B. He was a civilian who rescued people from Kibbutz Be'eri.
- ☐ C. He was a leader of the "Elhanan Team."
- ☐ D. He was a journalist reporting on the attack.

3. **2. Why did Menahem Kalmanson and his team go to the south? *** 10 points

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ A. To visit their friends.
- ☐ B. To help people who were attacked.
- ☐ C. To escape the fighting.
- ☐ D. To find a safer place.

4. **3. What was the significance of the phrase "Shma Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad" for Michal Meir? *** 10 points

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ A. It was a prayer she often recited.
- ☐ B. It was a code word they used to identify themselves.
- ☐ C. It was a sign that they were friendly and meant no harm.
- ☐ D. It was a song she liked to sing.

5. **4. What did Menahem Kalmanson emphasize in his speech about the importance of unity?** * 10 points

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ A. The need for political agreement.
- ☐ B. The value of religious tolerance.
- ☐ C. The strength of family bonds.
- ☐ D. The power of human connection.

6. **5. How did Menahem Kalmanson describe his brother, Elhanan?** * 10 points

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ A. As a brave and selfless person.
- ☐ B. As a strict and demanding leader.
- ☐ C. As a talented and creative individual.
- ☐ D. As a peaceful and gentle soul.

7. **6. What did Menahem Kalmanson believe was the key to overcoming division?** * 10 points

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ A. By focusing on shared values and experiences.
- ☐ B. By punishing those who cause conflict.
- ☐ C. By ignoring differences and pretending they don't exist.
- ☐ D. By imposing strict rules and regulations.

8. **7. What was the main message of Menahem Kalmanson's speech?** * 10 points

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ A. The importance of military strength.
- ☐ B. The need for political reform.
- ☐ C. The value of human life.
- ☐ D. The power of love and compassion.

9. **8. Why did Menahem Kalmanson say that "the blood of our brothers cries out from the ground"?** * 10 points

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ A. To emphasize the importance of religious beliefs.
- ☐ B. To remind people of the sacrifices made during the war.
- ☐ C. To call for a peaceful resolution to the conflict.
- ☐ D. To criticize the government for its actions.

10. **9. What does the phrase "we are our brother's keeper" mean in the context of the text?** * 10 points

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ A. We are responsible for the actions of others.
- ☐ B. We should always be there to help those in need.
- ☐ C. We must protect our family and friends at all costs.
- ☐ D. We should be forgiving and understanding.

11. 10. What is the overall tone of Menahem Kalmanson's speech? * 10 points

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ A. Angry and bitter.
- ☐ B. Hopeful and inspiring.
- ☐ C. Sad and mournful.
- ☐ D. Humorous and lighthearted.

12. 11. Consider the speaker's emphasis on the importance of brotherhood and community support during difficult times. How do you think these values can help in resolving conflicts within a divided society? Provide specific examples from your own experiences or what you have observed in your community. (This is a bonus activity).
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Click on Submit and then click on View your score.

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Learn more: Menhem Kalmanson tells the story of how he saved people and how his older brother, Elchanan, died.

Watch [this video](#) and answer two of these questions in [this Linoit](#):

1. What lesson about strength and solidarity can be drawn from this video?
2. How does sharing stories of kindness and heroism help a community grow stronger after a tragedy?
3. In what ways can people support each other to overcome sadness and pain?
4. What lessons can we learn from stories of sacrifice and bravery?



Fill in the blanks in this [exercise](#).

Suggested Discussion Questions

1. In what ways might recognizing civilian heroes through national awards impact the country's values and priorities?
2. The speech highlights the tension between different groups in society. How do you think empathy can play a role in bridging these divisions? Provide reasons and examples to support your answer.
3. Reflect on the idea of "shared destiny" mentioned in the speech. How does this concept affect a society's ability to face challenges together? Provide specific examples to illustrate your points.
4. In the speech, the concept of love for family is emphasized. How can this love extend beyond family to include the broader community? Discuss the benefits of this perspective.
5. Menahem Kalmanson calls for listening and understanding among people with differing opinions. How can open dialogue contribute to healing divisions in society? Discuss potential barriers to effective communication and how to overcome them.

Links

- [The Heroic Story of Menahem Kalmanson: A Recipient of the 2024 Israel Prize in Heroism and Rescue. A unit to print](#)
- [Stunning Speech By Menahem Kalmanson, October 7th Hero Who Received Israel Prize For Civic Heroism](#)
- [Menahem Kalmanson, Israel Prize](#)
- [Gibor Yisrael: The Heroic Story of Elchanan Kalmanson](#)
- [How ordinary citizens became superhuman on October 7: A new book recounts their tales](#)
- [The story of Elchanan Kalmanson will be part of the educational curriculum](#)
- [Israel Prize for heroism goes to two civilians who rescued dozens at Kibbutz Be'eri](#)
- [Truck dashcam footage shows farmer dodging bullets as he saved 120 from music festival](#)
- [Elhanan Team, Wikipedia](#)

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