**Mishy Harman (narration):** Hey Israel Story listeners, it’s Mishy. Last Saturday, just as chants of “de-mo-kra-tia” started coming up from the demonstration outside the President’s house, we said goodbye to my wise, modest, and gentle dad - David Harman.

My father was an educator. He believed in people, in social justice and in our ability to overcome almost anything. He was an eternal optimist and a patient peacemaker. He guided me through life’s ups and downs, and taught me its most fundamental lesson - one that is also the deep premise of Israel Story - that a person is a person is a person, no matter what.

He didn’t see class or nationality. Ethnicity or religion. Gender or attainments. Instead, he saw people. And when he saw them, he was genuinely curious about them.

My dad was a world class raconteur and - as such - encouraged me every step of the way and absolutely loved our show. In fact, I was in the car with him when our very first episode aired on the radio, and I can clearly remember how proud he was.

In the years since he has pitched hundreds of ideas, and I’d often get excited phone calls from him saying that he just heard the most amazing story from a cab driver, and here was his number, and I should call immediately.

My dad appeared on the show a bunch of times over the years, and today, as one of the many ways I’ll be honoring and remembering him, I want to share some of those stories.

The first is a piece we ran in 2016 about our family pastime - talking to each other on the phone. **Act One - Just Checking In.**

**Mishy Harman:** Hello?

**Danna Harman:** Hi, Mishy?

**Mishy Harman:** Hey, Danz, how you doing?

**Danna Harman:** Hi! *beseder*, what's up?

**Mishy Harman:** Danz, I want to ask you something, how how many times did you talk to Mom and Dad today?

**Danna Harman:** Ummm, let's see what time it is, it's about four o'clock. I've spoken to Mom once, Dad once, Mom once, four times in total I would say.

**Mishy Harman:** And ahh... is that... is that a normal day or is that a low frequency day?

**Danna Harman:** *[Danna laughs]* That's pretty normal at around this hour usually there are a couple more phone calls back and forth in the evening. So sometimes, sometimes they call me together. When they call together from the house usually it starts with both of them on the line each one on a different telephone and then at some point Mom goes, "David I can't hear anything, close the phone." *[Danna and Mishy laugh]*. And then Dad closes the phone, and then me and Mom have a whole conversation: Who, when, what, what did, what, what, what, what, what what, what… We finish the conversation, we hang up, and then Dad calls me back. He's like, "Hey what's new?" I'm like, "What's new?! I just had a whole load down with Mom." He's like, "Yeah, but I wasn't there for it." We have the whole thing over again between me and Dad. *[Danna and Mishy laugh].* Then usually they'll call again late at night cuz’ no one's sleeping over there at the household, and then Mom's half asleep and Dad's talking to me and then we hang up and crash to sleep, and then first thing in the morning, I'd say seven thirty, eight, someone calls me and they're like, "Hey what's new? What's up?" *[Danna laughs].* What could be up? What what more could have happened?

**Mishy Harman:** And and how old, how old are you Danz?

**Danna Harman:** *[Danna laughs]* I am forty-five years old.

**Mishy Harman:** Okay, one one second, I wanna, I wanna bring Oren up on the line, ummm... so one second I'm just gonna, let's let's let's let's call Oren.

**Danna Harman:** OK.

**Oren Harman:** Hello?

**Mishy Harman:** Hey Ori!

**Oren Harman:** Hey Mish, how's it going?

**Mishy Harman:** Good, Danz is on the line too...

**Danna Harman:** Hi Ori!

**Oren Harman:** Hi Danz!

**Mishy Harman:** Ori, listen, I have a question, how many times a day, on average, ahhhh... do you speak to Mom and Dad?

**Oren Harman:** Oh I don't know, I'd say about between ahh... four and five. *[Mishy and Danna laughs]* I mean ahh… you know, every morning ah… at around nine o'clock, just as I'm about to leave the house, that's when the first phone call comes.

**Mishy Harman:** Okay, okay. *[Danna laughs].*

**Oren Harman:** And ah… I've got a foot out the door but it's ah... it always ends up being about fifteen minutes of ah... discussions of your love life, and Danna's love life, and stuff like that.

**Mishy Harman:** Uh-huh.

**Oren Harman:** That's the first phone call.

**Mishy Harman:** Yeah.

**Oren Harman:** Then around you know twelve in the afternoon, lunchtime, I'd say that's when the second phone call comes in.

**Mishy Harman:** Uh-huh.

**Oren Harman:** And about two or three times ahhh... you know towards the evening and once before I go to bed. How many times you speak to Mom and Dad?

**Mishy Harman:** I'd say I talk to Mom and Dad on average ahhh... somewhere between let's say five and seven times a day.

**Oren Harman:** Really?!

**Danna Harman:** Mish, that's cuz’ the rest of the time you're actually at the house, so they don't need to call you, cuz’ you're there, with them. Every time I call them or speak to them, you're in the house!

**Mishy Harman:** Uh-huh, uh-huh, uh-huh *[Danna laughs]*.

**Danna Harman:** Nachon, Oren?

**Oren Harman:** Yeah, of course.

**Mishy Harman:** And, tell me something, do you think that it's normal that we talk, that we talk to Mom and Dad so much?

**Oren Harman:** Sure it's normal! A forty-three-year-old, forty-six-year-old...

**Danna Harman:** No...

**Oren Harman:** And a thirty-four-year-old talking to their parents on average fifteen times a day? *[Mishy laughs]*. I'd say it's pretty normal.

**Mishy Harman:** One sec, let's let's bring Mom and Dad on the line a second. Hello?

**Dorothy Harman:** Hi Mish, how are you cookie?

**Mishy Harman:** Hi, *Imma*!

**David Harman:** Hi Mishy!

**Mishy Harman:** Hi *Abba*!

**Dorothy Harman:** Hi!

**Danna Harman:** Mom, hi!

**Dorothy and David Harman:** Hi!

**Oren Harman:** Hi *Abba, ma nishma?*

**Dorothy Harman:** Hi *tootzileh*! Hi everybody.

**David Harman:** Hi!

**Danna Harman:** Hi guys, hi *Imma’le*, hi Dad *[Dorothy laughs]*!

**Mishy Harman:** How's it going?

**David Harman:** Hi cookie.

**Dorothy Harman:** Nice to hear your voice, great. What's up with you guys?

**Mishy Harman:** Good ahh... *Imma*! Who do you talk to the most from... you know, from all the kids?

**Dorothy Harman:** You of course! You're here, I speak to you all the time.

**Danna Harman:** *[Danna laughs]* Told you!

**Dorothy Harman:** You know that Mish! You're the one who calls us most of the time.

**Mishy Harman:** I call you?!

**Dorothy Harman:** Of course.

**David Harman:** Of course.

**Oren Harman:** Yeah, how many times does Mishy call a day, *Imma*? How many times?

**David Harman:** Half a dozen.

**Dorothy Harman:** At least! I mean half a dozen is is is...

**Danna Harman:** At least...

**Dorothy Harman:** Is a small amount. Yeah.

**Oren Harman:** A very low estimate *[Dorothy laughs]*.

**Dorothy Harman:** Yeah, right, you know. We check it, we check in all the time.

**Danna Harman:** We like being in contact.

**Dorothy Harman:** Right!

**Mishy Harman:** *Imma*...

**Dorothy Harman:** Listen, everybody's making fun of us, but it's it's silly, because I think we're very lucky, we want to be in touch, we like to share all our things that's going on. All the stories. So, everybody else is missing out. For us it's wonderful that we have three such great kids and we love to talk to them, and they like to talk to us. That's the truth!

**Mishy Harman:** Yeah, it's cozy, no? Danna it's cozy.

**Dorothy Harman:** It's two ways, it is cozy. Sometimes it gets a little much, right Dan? Dan, sometimes you feel like it's a little overbearing.

**Danna Harman:** I'm just not a big phone talker honestly. I'm like the less phone talker in the family.

**Dorothy Harman:** Right.

**David Harman:** Rarely ever happens that I call Mishy and his phone isn't busy.

**Mishy Harman:** Cuz’ I'm talking to Oren or Danna. *[Dorothy, David and Danna laugh]* Do you think there's any connection between the fact that we're all so close, and talk so often and the fact that um, well I guess let's say that those amongst us that did get married, got married kinda late in life?

**Dorothy Harman:** Listen... You know, don't blame us for you guys not getting your act together. Get married. That'd be lovely. Then we'll talk more with the grandchildren. Goodbye!

**David Harman:** Dan, *b'teavon*.

**Danna Harman:** Bye.

**Mishy Harman:** Bye.

**Dorothy Harman:** Bye.

**Danna Harman:** Bye, bye everybody.

**Mishy Harman:** Bye.

**David Harman:** Bye.

**Mishy Harman (narration):** We’ll be right back**.**

And now, back to our episode.

So as you just heard, my dad and I spoke a lot. Constant chatting was sort of our thing.

He was 78 when he died, and in recent months - as his health declined - we got to spend even more time together than we usually did. But it was a different *kind* of time. It wasn’t frenzied and action-packed. There were no concerts at the YMCA or visits to the archeological wing at the Israel Museum. No heated political arguments around the Shabbat dinner table or running commentary - increasingly desperate in the last few years - while watching the 8 o’clock news together.

Instead these were very calm and peaceful times. And during those countless hours, we spoke about life and death. About socialism and education. About Israel and the future. Judaism and democracy. Jerusalem. Dreams.

He’d tell me nostalgic stories of a different era. See, my dad was born in Jerusalem in 1944. World War II was still raging, and Jerusalem - then a small town of 60,000 - was under the British Mandate. The State was born when my dad was four - he could remember the celebrations in the street - and the story of his life was, in many many ways, intertwined with the story of Israel. He fought in two of its wars - the Six Day War and the Yom Kippur War - but believed in peace and coexistence, and worked - for many years - to improve the Palestinian education system. At the same time, he was a proud Zionist, and was instrumental in many glorious chapters of the Zionist tale, including the immigration operations from the former Soviet Union and Ethiopia.

He often seemed to me like a living history book, and that feeling is what I tried to capture in a small story we aired back in 2017, in an episode marking the centennial of the Balfour Declaration. **Act Two - Not Your Typical Landlady.**

**Mishy Harman (narration):** These days, when most Israelis hear the name ‘Balfour’ they don’t think of good old Arthur James, his phenomenal facial hair or his philosemitic Declaration. Instead, the first association that comes to mind is a street. A street in Jerusalem. Balfour Street.

And what’s so special about that street? Well, a lot of things really, but probably nothing more than the identity of the resident living at number three. The Prime Minister.

That’s right, America has Pennsylvania Avenue, the Brits have Downing Street and we, we’ve got Balfour.

**Mishy Harman:** Abba, do you think that there’s some symbolism in the fact that the Prime Minister of Israel lives on Balfour Street?

**David Harman:** Yeah, you can… You can impute symbolism to anything. If you want to think it’s a symbolic thing, OK. But this Prime Minister’s building is now by decision of the government gonna be moved. There goes your symbolism.

**Mishy Harman:** You know that it’s Bibi’s birthday today.

**David Harman:** Mazel tov!

**Mishy Harman (narration):** I asked my dad, David, to meet me on Balfour Street.

**David Harman:** OK, what we gonna do? We’re gonna walk here?

**Mishy Harman (narration):** This was, after all, where he grew up.

**David Harman:** Yeah, our home was right down this street to the left, on Disraeli Street, a street named for another British Prime Minister.

**Mishy Harman:** So would you come here a lot when you were a kid?

**David Harman:** Yeah, I walked up and down here all the time. I walked on this still at least once or twice a day ‘cuz this was the route that you took from our apartment into the center of town.

**Mishy Harman (narration):** We set out on a little stroll down memory lane.

**David Harman:** Yeah, well, this building right here to our right, there were a number of very important people who lived in that building. The one who lived on the first floor was Prof. Michaelson, who was my opthamologist and prescribed my first glasses when I was nine years old. And on the top floor lived Moshe Sharett, who was Israel’s second Prime Minister, it was his private apartment.

**Mishy Harman:** It’s not a particularly fancy building or anything. It’s just an apartment building.

**David Harman:** It’s an apartment building. A walk-up in fact. Sharett walked up two flights. In this building, also lived Zalman and Rachel Shazar. Zalman Shazar became Israel’s third President.

**Mishy Harman:** Why did all these people live on this one street?

**David Harman:** Well, it was walking distance from where they worked, the Prime Minister’s office.

**Mishy Harman (narration):** Just sit with that for a second. The reason all these founding fathers and mothers of the State lived here, in modest apartment buildings, was because they could *walk* to work. No limos, no motorcades, just feet.

There were also other houses on Balfour Street, older, single family houses.

**David Harman:** Like the one right here to our right, which is where our very close friend Walter Eytan lived.

**Mishy Harman:** So these were Arab buildings originally, that were left, or forced to leave in ‘48?

**David Harman:** I believe so.

**Mishy Harman:** And then they were basically annexed by Jews?

**David Harman:** Yes. And this building over here, which is a brand new building (brand new… it was built in the 50s), was where a classmate of mine, Nira Bar-Akivah, lived and we used to have class get-togethers there. Yeah, and across the street in this building, lived Amir Schor, another classmate of mine. And Amir and Nira ultimately got married.

**Mishy Harman:** These two classmates that lived across the street from each other?

**David Harman:** Yeah, but they were not going together when we were kids. Now I think it was this building, if I’m not mistaken… *[goes under].*

**Mishy Harman (narration):** My dad had stories about each and every house. One was where Alex Kainan used to live.

**David Harman:** Alex was a professor at the Hebrew University, a friend of the family’s.

**Mishy Harman (narration):** Another was the home of Yitzhak Nissim.

**David Harman:** The Sephardic Chief Rabbi.

**Mishy Harman (narration):** My dad told me tale after wonderful tale of Jerusalem in the 1950s, but none of them captivated my imagination as much as the story about when he, and an unusual roommate, shared the big old house on the corner of Balfour and Smolenskin.

**David Harman:** Mishy, I’ve told you the story six times. It’s recorded ten times. Again you want me to tell you?

**Mishy Harman:** Yeah, again.

**David Harman:** In May of 1962…

**Mishy Harman** **(narration)**: My dad – who was then eighteen - came back to Israel, in order to go into the army. He had been living with his family in Washington D.C. for a few years, since *his* dad, Abe, was serving as an Israeli diplomat there. My father was going to be what’s called a *Chayal Boded*, a lone soldier whose family doesn’t reside in the country, and he needed to find a place to live.

So a week or two before he was supposed to go into the army my dad and his dad came to Israel (it was quite a trip back then), to go apartment searching. And that’s how, on a warm day of early summer, they found themselves trekking up Gaza Street, in Jerusalem’s Rehavia neighborhood.

**David Harman:** Checking out a few places which I could rent. And as we were walking, a car (a pretty fancy car by the standards of those days) stopped and the window rolled down and an elderly lady poked out her head and said, “Abe and David what are you doing here?”

**Mishy Harman** **(narration)**: The elderly lady in question…

**David Harman:** It was Golda Meir, who was then the Foreign Minister, my father’s boss, and an old time family friend.

**Mishy Harman (narration):** Jerusalem was a small town in those days. A place where it made sense that you’d bump into the Foreign Minister and start chit-chatting. In any event, they told Golda they were looking for a room for my dad, who was about to go into the army.

**David Harman:** And she immediately said “stop looking, I live in a house, a block and a half away from here, which is all empty, and it would be a pleasure if you just came and took a room there. And two days later I moved in.

**Mishy Harman:** What did you think when she said “come live with me”?

**David Harman:** I was delighted! It was a good address, great location, low rent.

**Mishy Harman:** So Golda was your first roommate?

**David Harman:** She was not my roommate, we were housemates. I was her boarder.

**Mishy Harman** **(narration)**: Golda was then living in the Foreign Minister’s official residence, at number three Balfour Street, which later on became the Prime Minister’s house.

**Mishy Harman:** What was it like living with Golda?

**David Harman:** Well, firstly, Golda was a very warm and wonderful person. And I must say somewhat lonely. I mean she was this important woman and she would come home usually late in the evening, to ummm… usually an empty house.

**Mishy Harman** **(narration)**: On a typical night, my dad recalls, she would swing by his room, and very softly say…

**David Harman:** “David? Ata Sham?”

**Mishy Harman** **(narration)**: “Are you there?”

**David Harman:** And I would come down, and we would sit and have tea. And she would take a sugar cube and break it in the palm of her hand and put one half in each cheek and that’s how she drank her tea. And she drank her tea and smoked. She smoked unfiltered Chesterfield cigarettes. And we would sit around the table in the famous kitchen, ‘Golda’s Kitchen,’ and spend hours discussing this, that and the other.

**Mishy Harman** **(narration)**: Now, living with the Foreign Minister wasn’t exactly the *most* normal way to spend your military service.

**David Harman:** I was in a unit where we were told - and I kept to it assiduously - not to say anything about what we’re doing. (It was an intelligence unit). So when she asked me what I was doing in the army I would say, “I’m sorry, I can’t tell you.” She said, “you can tell me. *[David laughs]* It’s OK.”

**Mishy Harman** **(narration)**: My dad lived with Golda Meir for close to four years, and still talks about her - and that period - with a mixture of nostalgia and admiration.

**David Harman:** As far as I was concerned, in addition to having a good friend, and a very warm sort of mother figure… Ummm, once I had a toothache and Golda prepared some grandma’s remedy for me with salt which she fried and then put in a handkerchief and then I put it on my cheek and ummm… (It didn’t help, mind you). But beyond that, thinking back, I basically had a front row seat during a critical period of this country’s development, seeing the workings of government, and to just be a fly on the wall while all this was going on is one of the most significant experiences of my life.

**Mishy Harman** **(narration)**: Today Bibi and Sarah live in that grand old house, and things are a bit less village-like than the days in which my dad and Golda would go grocery shopping together, or catch the late night showing at the Eden cinema downtown. There’s a tall wall surrounding the house, and severe looking *Shabakniks* don’t let you get close. The entire block is now closed off, and we had to get special permission just to stand there and talk.

**David Harman:** I told them that I was just coming through to record some memories with my son, and they said ‘OK, just don’t take pictures.’This was totally open when I was a kid. None of these cameras were here, nothing. And there were two elderly policemen at the front entrance, and this was not considered a heavy-duty job for policemen.

**Mishy Harman** **(narration)**: As we walked back to the car at the end of our little walking tour, my dad noticed a sign in one of the windows.

**David Harman:** Oh, that apartment’s for sale, my G-d, ha! Sharett’s apartment.

**Mishy Harman:** You interested?

**David Harman:** No.

**Mishy Harman:** You wouldn’t want to live on Balfour Street?

**David Harman:** Ahhhh… Location is good. Well this was a great pleasure.

**Mishy Harman:** Thank you, Abba. That was fun!

**David Harman:** Yeah. Don’t use a lot of it.

**Mishy Harman:** What do you mean?

**David Harman:** How much are you going to use of this?

**Mishy Harman:** All of it!

**David Harman:** You are not!

**Mishy Harman:** Ha?

**David Harman:** You are not!

**Mishy Harman:** *Tov, yalla.*

**David Harman:** *Yalla chamud.*

**Mishy Harman:** Bye.

*[Kiss]*

**David Harman:** See you later.

**Mishy Harman (narration):** We’ll be right back.

And now, back to our episode.

My dad passed away at home. Thankfully, we were all there with him, by his side, holding his hand. It was peaceful and amazingly similar to another deathbed scene that occurred almost exactly a decade earlier, and which I tried to describe in this story as part of our season three opener. **Act Three - A Gift from Savta.**

**Mishy Harman (narration**): In the winter of 2012, my older brother, Oren, got a phone call from a close friend of his.

**Oren Harman**: He said, “listen, I swim with this girl. I don’t know her too well, but she’s a really beautiful swimmer. *[Yael laughs]*. And you can know, you can know… *[Oren laughs]*, you can know eighty percent of a person’s character from the way they swim. *[Yael laughs].* So I… I suggest that you meet her.

**Mishy Harman (narration**): Later that day, Yael, the swimmer, also received a call.

**Yael Barash**: Yes, so my coach called me and he asked me, "can I introduce you to some guy?” And I said, "sure, I would love to!”

**Mishy Harman (narration**): The swimming coach gave Yael my brother’s name, and she - of course - began googling. At some point she came across an old TEDx talk he had given. Her initial reaction?

**Yael Barash**: Well… First I thought he’s a bit chubby *[Oren laughs]*, cute. Definitely cute, but eh… just a little bit chubby. *[Oren laughs]*. But I thought I will give it a chance. *[Yael laughs].*

**Mishy Harman (narration**): They spoke on the phone, and set up a date, in Tel Aviv.

**Yael Barash**: OK, so *Yekkes* typically come on time, but Iraqi are… (and I’m Iraqi) come ahead of time. And I tried really hard not to come early. I thought a man should wait for a woman, and, you know, strategically I thought it was wrong *[Oren laughs]* to come ahead of time, or early. So I tried to keep busy and not to be early but eventually I arrived and Oren wasn’t there. I was, again, too early. I thought he should wait for me, but…

**Oren Harman:** Aha-ha.

**Yael Barash**: I waited for him. Then I saw him from far away arriving. And he had like a light blue shirt, and a short pants. And you looked very… You were very good looking man. Though the cutest part of your dressing was that you missed a button *[Oren laughs]*. You know it was so cute to see you with this open shirt, and missed a button and shorts, and I thought, ‘wow, what a man!’ *[Yael laughs]*.

**Oren Harman**: *[Oren laughs]* Thank you! Let's just say it was pretty unusual date for me too. Cuz’ when it ended we walked towards the boulevard, remember? And ahhh… you know we were about to say goodbye and suddenly you… you pounced on me and gave me a kiss. Remember?

**Yael Barash**: Yeah, I… It wasn’t exactly like that…

**Oren Harman:** It was… *[Oren laughs]* It was exactly like that! It was, it was quite a kiss.

**Yael Barash**: Thank you.

**Mishy Harman (narration**): My brother was super enthusiastic, and they began going out. Everything, at least outwardly, seemed to be promising. But…

**Oren Harman**: Then after about three weeks, I said to Yael, ''look, I really like you, ummm... But I… I’m sorry I really have to think about it a little bit more.”

**Yael Barash**: Yes, you said that you needed a break. But breaks are the most annoying things in relationship. Like, what’s a break? What do you need? Half-an-hour break? Day? Two days? How long of a break do you need?

**Mishy Harman (narration**): Oren didn’t really know what to say. So Yael? She decided for him.

**Oren Harman**: She said, “don’t call me for a month.''

**Yael Barash**: Yes. *[Yael laughs]*.

**Mishy Harman (narration**): So Oren and Yael were on some sort of undefined hiatus. He constantly told us, (and this was nothing new), that he wasn’t sure, and didn’t know. Anyway, the month-long-break was supposed to end, or be reevaluated, on his fortieth birthday, January twenty-fifth.

**Oren Harman:** And then on the twentieth of January, I met up with my best friend on the boulevard, and he said, “Oren, your choice has nothing to do with Yael. You have to choose whether you want to continue to be a single guy, living in Tel Aviv, having fun, or to become a family man. And in both routes you’ll have great highs and happinesses and really frustrating lows, but that’s the choice you need to make.”

**Mishy Harman (narration**): Oren thought about his friend’s advice, and then said to himself, “*yalla,* *al ha’chaim ve’al ha’mavet*,” sort of the Hebrew equivalent of ‘here goes nothing,’ or ‘it’s now or never.’

**Oren Harman**: The very evening, I ran to your house, on Sokolov Street number 8, I remember it: I ran and I ran and I ran and ran until I got to your door, I knock on your door with the thought of saying - “come on, let's go for it!’

**Mishy Harman (narration**): But Yael... wasn’t home. Oren called her cell, and when she picked up, she said that she was visiting a friend in the Golan, that there was almost no reception and that she could barely hear him, so they better just talk properly when she returned, as planned, a few days later on his birthday.

The next day, Oren and I went to have dinner with our parents, in Kiryat Yovel, in Jerusalem.

Now, we all grew up at 53 Shmaryahu Levin Street, right across the street from number 50, where my dad’s parents lived. My grandfather Abe had died many years earlier, when I was in third grade, but my grandmother, Zena… she was still alive and kicking, and almost ninety-nine. In any event, we all sat down to eat.

**Oren Harman**: And suddenly there was a phone call from the other side of the road, from Savta’s house. It was Melnie, her caretaker, she was hysterical and she said, “come, come, come over. Mrs. Harman not feeling well.”

**Mishy Harman (narration**): Oren, my father and I quickly ran over. We went straight into the den, where Savta was sitting in her favorite purple armchair.

**David Harman**: She was just breathing heavily.

**Mishy Harman (narration**): That’s my dad, David.

**David Harman:** She had a small smile on her face. And she gradually breathed less and less heavily, as we were standing by her side.

**Oren Harman**: We held her hand.

**Mishy Harman**: And we actually, didn’t really say anything to each other.

**David Harman**: No. No. We didn’t.

**Oren Harman**: I think we all just realized what was happening.

**David Harman**: At a certain point she just stopped breathing. Very simply. She just stopped breathing.

**Oren Harman**: And with her last breath, a small tear fell down Savta’s cheek.

**David Harman**: What is called in Hebrew a “mot neshika” - a kiss of death. And it was over.

**Oren Harman**: That’s it, Savta was gone.

**Mishy Harman (narration**): Now, even though my Savta was so old, we were all pretty stunned by her death, because there was no preparation, or illness, or hospitalization. I guess we all just figured she’d go on living forever.

Within a few minutes, the Magen David Adom paramedics arrived, and we had to convince them that there was no need to try and resuscitate my Savta. Then the police showed up, because that's what happens when someone dies at home. And once they left, we were alone, just the family, with Savta.

We tried reaching the *Hevre Kadisha* (the Jewish burial company), so that they could come collect her body. But no one answered the phone, because it was after 11pm, and the very next day there were elections to the Knesset. (Clearly they just assumed that people would be so eager to vote, that no one would even think of dying the night before the elections). Finally, around two in the morning, we managed to get ahold of some sleepy officer on duty.

**Oren Harman**: He said that they couldn’t make it that night, and we should sleep with Savta’s corpse and keep her company. Ummm, and so we covered her body with a sheet, and that's it, we just stayed with her, it was a quiet night.

**David Harman**: We all sat there with her, ummm… and thought about Savta, each one his own thoughts, his own memories, and we felt that we were there in her last evening. We were all there together.

**Oren Harman**: We all really felt that we were with her, accompanying her on her last night in her house.

**Mishy Harman (narration**): Gradually, all the grandchildren brought sleeping bags and blankets and spread them around Savta. It was sort of like the pajama parties we used to have there when we were kids.

**Oren Harman**: We all just slept next to Savta on the floor.

**Mishy Harman (narration**): Throughout the night we talked, laughed, reminisced.

**Oren Harman**: It was all really sad. She was our mother, she was everyone’s mother. She was the mother of our family.

**Mishy Harman (narration**): Now, that very night, you might recall, Oren was still in the middle of his ongoing saga with Yael. Sure, there were four more days till his birthday, the scheduled deadline, when they had agreed to talk. But Oren? He couldn’t wait.

**Yael Barash**: Then Oren called me, and he sounded really sad and miserable, and he told me that his grandma just… his Savta, just died. And that you were all with her through the night. And I knew Savta. I’ve been to one of the Friday night dinners, and I saw how all the family comes and sit around the table with her. And although she didn’t talk, she was the center of the evening. And I knew that it’s something really dramatic happened, and I really wanted to be with him.

**Oren Harman**: The next day, Yael showed up and pretty much stayed for the whole Shiva.

**Mishy Harman (narration**): And, before any of us really understood what was going on, Yael had transitioned from being this girl Oren had briefly dated, to sort of being a family member.

**Oren Harman**: Yael really was with us, almost like a part of the family. And I… I didn’t realize it at the time, I don’t think, but I guess my heart already knew. And five weeks later we were engaged.

**Yael Barash:** Yes! We were on a trip in Amuka and suddenly he went down on his knee and he gave me a blade of grass made into a ring, and ask me to marry him.

**Mishy Harman (narration**): Oren had waited for forty years to find a bride, but all at once his patience was up. And everything happened very quickly.

**Yael Barash**: We got married in June 2013, and a year later, in June 2014, our daughter was born.

**Mishy Harman:** Chuchi, what’s your name?

**Shai Zena Harman:** Shai Zena!

**Mishy Harman:** Shai Zena?

**Shai Zena Harman:** Yeah!

**Mishy Harman:** Shai Zena Harman?

**Shai Zena Harman:** Yeah!

**Mishy Harman:** And who are you named for?

**Shai Zena Harman:** For Savta Zena.

**Mishy Harman (narration**): Shai, in Hebrew, means gift. So little Shaizee was really…

**Yael Barash:** A gift from Zena. From Savta Zena. Because we felt that thanks to… in a way, thanks to her death, we got back together and Shaizee was born.

**Oren Harman**: And I guess Savta leaving us was sort of our family’s beginnings, and it was very joyous.

*[Shai Zena singing]*

**Mishy Harman:** Shai Zena?

**Shai Zena Harman:** Yeah!

**Mishy Harman:** Was Savta Zena old?

**Shai Zena Harman:** Yeah!

**Mishy Harman:** How old?

**Shai Zena Harman:** Ummm… This old.

**Mishy Harman:** Are you showing me with your hands?

**Shai Zena Harman:** This old. *[Yael laughs].*

**Mishy Harman (narration):** My dad’s eldest granddaughter, Shai Zena, is now almost nine. Since we recorded that story her brother Abie and sister Sol joined the family, and - two years ago - my own little daughter, Hallel, my dad’s youngest grandchild, was born. This is what he wished her, from his hospital bed, on her second birthday.

**David Harman:** Hi, Halleli. Happy birthday on number two, beginning number three. What an adventure you have ahead of you. Love you, sweetheart. Be well, from Saba.

**Mishy Harman:** Abba, what do you think are the most important things that we need to teach Hallel?

**David Harman:** To be a good person.

**Mishy Harman:** What else?

**David Harman:** To care about people, about other people, and do things that improve peoples’ condition.

**Mishy Harman (narration):** My father David shall forever be my teacher, my compass and my best friend.

We’ll close this tribute with his favorite song in the world, Shoshana Damari’s *Kalaniot*.

I love you Abba, the most and always.