



# Panim. yom. Zikaron.

A Face. A Memory. A Day

STUDY AND REMEMBER

## A Face. A Memory. A Day

To commemorate *Yom HaZikaron* (Israel's Memorial Day for Fallen Soldiers and Victims of Terror) in a more meaningful way, Beit Avi Chai has created a diverse set of interactive educational curriculums for its [A Face. A Memory. A Day](#) animated film project.

Each curriculum includes descriptive overviews, activities, questions and topics for discussion. Each curriculum is also purposely designed to be adapted in different educational settings for different age groups, with tools for teachers, informal educators and community leaders.

Beit Avi Chai's *A Face. A Memory. A Day* initiative employs captivating storytelling and masterful animation that brings to life special moments frozen in time from the lives of our fallen soldiers and victims of terror. The films enable us to experience *personal memory* through the eyes of those whom we lost. As viewers, we are offered a chance to share in their *collective memory*.

We have no doubt that you will find this project as meaningful as we do.

Should you have questions or thoughts that you would like to share, we welcome you to write to us at: [remember.edu@avichai.org.il](mailto:remember.edu@avichai.org.il).

The *A Face. A Memory. A Day* Team  
Beit Avi Chai, Jerusalem



## STUDY AND REMEMBER

---

# Focus

---



## Activity Guide for the Animated Short Films “Gail” and “Lior”

---

### Facilitator Introduction:

From the moment we open our eyes in the morning until we fall asleep at night we use our eyes to see. The eyes are continually at work, reacting to stimuli and moving around our environment as we choose to look at certain objects.

This Activity Guide will invite us to connect with two individuals of incredible focus - Gail Rubin and Lior Yonatan. Both Gail and Lior had a passion for photography and a love of nature.

Gail was a civilian killed in a terror attack in 1978, aged 39. Lior was a Lieutenant in the Israeli Army's Tank Corps; he was killed during the Yom Kippur War in 1973, aged 21.

Photographers always need to choose a focal point for their frame to capture a particular landscape or subject just right. Gail and Lior too decided to focus their attention on those worthy things that a life could be centered around.

### Goals:

- \* Learn the different stories of Gail Rubin and Lior Yonatan.
- \* Explore how we prioritize what is important in life.
- \* Consider why we choose to focus on some things rather than others.

### Activity Length:

The suggested length is 50 min. For a shorter activity, please modify. There are additional activity options at the end of this Activity Guide for a longer, extended activity.

## First Part: “Gail” in Memory of Gail Rubin

(15 min)

*Facilitator:* This activity is part of the Beit Avi Chai project *A Face. A Memory. A Day*. The project uses animated films to commemorate fallen IDF soldiers and victims of terror in a way that brings a part of them back to life. With animation techniques and different artistic styles, the project allows us to connect to Yom HaZikaron through a new lens. We are going to watch a few short films.

Our first short film is about Gail Rubin, an American from Manhattan, New York. On the morning of March 11, 1978, while strolling along a beach at a Nature Reserve Gail was shot by terrorists who were on their way to carry out a mass terror attack that became known as the Coastal Road massacre. Most people in Israel are unfamiliar with Gail's story.

The film we are about to watch focuses on Gail's relationship with nature and her camera.

Show the film “[Gail](#)” (Length: 2 minutes and 46 seconds)

[Suggested film preview](#)

\* After screening the film, ask the students what they observed. Was there a particular moment, frame or element that caught their eye? What feelings did it evoke?

*Facilitator Notes:* There is more information about Gail's life on the [project's website](#) as well as an [obituary](#) written by her cousin.

The narrator reads out the full text of a poem by acclaimed Israeli poet [Natan Yonatan](#). The poem was written in response to the terror attack and opens with a line about a flower called the Retama or White Broom. In Hebrew, it is called Rotem - רותם. The flower holds protected status in Israel. There is a photograph of the Rotem flower in Appendix 1. At the end of this Activity Guide, there is an Additional Activity Option about Natan Yonatan.

*Facilitator:* It is interesting that Gail decided to live in Israel after visiting there in 1969. She worked as a war photographer, shadowing IDF soldiers and recording battles during the Yom Kippur War of 1973. After the war ended, she decided to become a nature photographer. She had exhibitions and published an album of landscape and wildlife photography.

**Question 1:** What do you think are some of the different motivations for taking photos of war and conflict as opposed to landscapes and nature?

See Appendix 2 for a printable handout with some suggested answers.

### Discussion Questions:

- \* Do you find it surprising that Gail made this transition between different genres of photography or do you think it was a natural progression?
- \* If you had to choose between two types of photography - nature and landscapes versus war and journalism - which would you prefer and why?

## Second Part: “Lior” in Memory of Lior Yonatan

(15 min)

*Facilitator:* Lior Yonatan was born in 1952 in Kibbutz Sarid, just over 20 miles southeast of Haifa. He was the older brother of Ziv and the son of Tzira and the poet Natan Yonatan. A quiet boy, Lior loved music and hiking. He was creative and smart and loved photography, nature and wildlife.

Lior served in the Armored Corps and was a tank commander at the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War in 1973. He died in a firefight with Egyptian forces on the Suez Canal during the first hours of the war.

The film we are about to watch is based upon a story told by Lior's mother. There are no words in the film and the animation style is simple and clear with some bold colors. It tells the story of Lior as a boy going for a nature walk in a forest with some friends. They encounter a snake and one of Lior's friends acts with cruelty towards it. Lior steps in to save the snake.

Show the short film [“Lior”](#) (Length: 3 minutes and 30 seconds)

**After screening the film, ask the following questions:**

**Question 1:** What things does Lior see during the film?

**Question 2:** What are the filmmakers trying to tell and show us about Lior?

**Question 3:** How well do you think Lior handled the situation with the snake and his friend?

**Suggested Answer 1:** The film shows Lior noticing things around him, even when others do not. He stops to observe a flower and sees a trail of ants. He looks up into the trees. The animation takes us soaring above the forest, over the sea and even higher into the outer reaches of space before bringing us down with a drop of rain back to the forest and to the snake.

**Suggested Answer 2:** Lior's worldview connects him to his surroundings. He sees how he himself, the walk with his friends and his immediate environment are linked with larger displays of nature's power and scale like the sunrise, the ocean and the stars. This is a beautiful quality.

**Suggested Answer 3:** The snake appears to scare Lior's friend but Lior is not shocked that easily. In a scene that lasts for many seconds, Lior looks intently at the snake. The animation appears to show them connecting somehow. Once Lior realizes his friend is about to kill the snake with a piece of wood we see Lior's fist clench (at 2 mins 18 seconds). We expect Lior to get angry and maybe even try to hit his friend. This does not happen. Lior stops his friend but then embraces him. They walk off together smiling with arms around each other. Lior's love of nature did not corrupt his view of humanity.

**Facilitator Note:** There is more information about Lior's life on the [project's website](#).

## Third Part: Small Group Discussion

(15 min)

*Facilitator:* Now that we have learned a little bit about Lior and Gail, we will return to the ideas of focus and prioritizing.

### Facilitator Note:

Even without being professional photographers, with some help from the facilitator the students will be able to see that the ideas of focus, framing and perspective do not only apply to the camera but can also serve as metaphors for life.

### Discussion Questions

- \* What does it mean to 'look at something through a lens'? Does it give us perspective? Focus? Insight?
- \* Does the camera bring us closer to the object/person being photographed? Or does the camera signify the distance between subject/object?
- \* How do we choose where to look when we take pictures?
- \* In life, what do we choose to focus on or look at?

## Conclusion

*Facilitator:* This activity has introduced us to two individuals - Gail Rubin and Lior Yonatan. The aim of the *A Face. A Memory. A Day* project is to commemorate Israel's fallen soldiers and victims of terror in a unique way. The short films we watched allowed us to connect with two individuals, among the many who are remembered each year on Yom HaZikaron.

We saw how Lior chose to look at things. He had the awareness to look around him and observe nature. He was able to choose to save the snake while maintaining his relationship with a friend.

Gail Rubin also made decisions about what to prioritize in life. She saw the horrors of war and chose to become a nature photographer.

Both Lior and Gail had strong values and ideas that influenced their behavior. Maybe that is food for thought for us when we contemplate the values that influence our decisions in our day-to-day life.

We were moved by Gail and Lior's passion for nature and photography. Their focus and choices inspire us to consider our own life's focus and priorities.

## Appendices

### Appendix I: Photograph of the Rotem - Retama flower



[Photo source](#)

## Appendix 2: Printable Handout

### Photography Motivations: War & Conflict vs Landscape & Nature

#### Why do we take photos of nature?

- Capture its beauty / majesty / scale / power / complexity
- Wonder and awe
- Natural ethics - natural is good
- Conservation
- Explore Humanity's place in the natural world
- Focusing on the small details reveals new worlds
- Capture the desire / thrill / experience of travel
- Meditation
- It is a challenge, like an extreme sport
- Documentary approach
- Quest to capture perfect image
- Creativity and art
- Harmony

#### Why do we take photos of war?

- Showing the horror and violence
- Bringing the front line to the home
- Ethics - teaching us the folly of war
- Exposing the impact of war on civilians and soldiers
- Combating propaganda
- Politics
- Documentary approach
- Courage and bravery of journalists
- Capturing the full human experience
- Telling a story
- Iconic moments eg flag raising at Iwo Jima
- Giving voice to the victims

## Appendix 3 - Optional Activities

### Optional Activity 1 - Photographers

Print out the selected quotations in Appendix 4. These are the quotes by some of the greatest photographers of the last century. Ask the group to choose the quotation they love the most and then to do a web search for pictures taken by that particular photographer. Ask the group to share their quotes and images.

### Optional Activity 2 - Poetry

Read together a section of text from Natan Yonatan's poem about the Rotem flower. It can be found in Appendix 5. A second poem by the same poet can be found in Appendix 6. This poem was composed and sung by Israeli singer Hava Alberstein. A link to the song can be found [here](#). Poetry reading and comparative text study for an appropriate group can be an excellent way to end this activity.

### Optional Activity 3 - Film Analysis

Watch the short film about Gail Rubin a second time and ask the group to make detailed notes. Paying attention to the animation techniques, editing and specific images will allow the group to find wonderful artistic elements and ideas to base a film analysis on. See Appendix 7 for some suggestions.



## Appendix 4: Printable Handout

Photographers on Photography

**“When words become unclear, I shall focus with photographs. When images become inadequate, I shall be content with silence.”**

Ansel Adams

**“I don't photograph life as it is, but life as I would like it to be.”**

Robert Doisneau

**“Life is once. Forever.”**

Henri Cartier-Bresson

**“The camera is an excuse to be someplace you otherwise don't belong. It gives me both a point of connection and a point of separation.”**

Susan Meiselas

**“The camera is an instrument that teaches people how to see without a camera.”**

Dorothea Lange

## Appendix 5: Ending of the Poem “And the Retama Flower Would Whiten”

Poem by Natan Yonatan

Full text in Hebrew can be found [here](#)

I wanted to leave behind a short confession about the love of the Retama and about the need to write poems.

I thought beauty could protect us and the children from fire and ice

That the delicate lining of silver flowers along the way

And the one land that remained

And the desert Retama and its awful beauty,

I thought.

## Appendix 6: “Seashores” by Natan Yonatan

Full text in Hebrew can be found [here](#)

Seashores sometimes yearn for the brook  
I once saw a shore  
To which no brook flows.  
That shore had a broken heart of sand and stone.  
And a man, a man, he also sometimes is able  
To be abandoned and helpless  
Just like that shore.

The seashells also are  
Like the shores, like the wind,  
Seashells also sometimes yearn  
For the house that we always loved  
Earlier. And only the sea  
Is singing lonely its song in them.  
Similarly, in the depths of the human heart  
The youth is singing.

## Appendix 7: Film Analysis Ideas

- \* Pay attention to the different animals and landscapes that Gail wants to photograph.

There are many images of nature in the film - kingfishers, herons, frogs, beaches, water, the retama flower, a bullet in the sand, etc.

- \* Notice the color tone of the film.

The animation starts with dark colors, representing the violence Gail was observing as a war photographer. The color palette then turns brighter as Gail begins to photograph nature landscapes and animals.

- \* Listen to the narration.

The film is narrated by the Israeli actor Ayelet Zurer who reads the full text of a poem by acclaimed Israeli poet Natan Yonatan. The poem was written about Gail. Placing the text with the images makes it feel like Gail is the narrator.

- \* Observe how Gail takes photographs

Notice the elusive nature of Gail's photography. Things seem to get away from her. The kingfisher flies away, her camera lens is clouded by water, the footsteps are washed away, birds fly up and away. Perhaps this is a comment on nature and life.

- \* Track the Zoom Ins and Out

There is one particular shot of the beach with the camera positioned from high above. Gail walks along the beach but it is very hard to see her. This could make us question the role of the protagonist - is Gail the focus, or is nature itself?