



## Educator's Guide

# Eli Cohen: The Mossad's Master Spy

This video explores Cohen's life, contributions, and ultimate dedication to the State of Israel. What is it like to give your very life for your country? To leave your family behind and risk everything for her?

Use this video and prompts to learn about the life and legacy of a true Israeli hero:

<https://unpacked.education/video/eli-cohen-the-mossads-master-spy/>

## Further Reading

1. Matti Friedman, *Spies of No Country*
2. Eli Ben-Hanan, *Our Man in Damascus*
3. Maurice Cohen, "A Brother's Story"  
<http://www.elicohen.org/resources/brothersstory/index.htm>
4. <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/eli-cohen>
5. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/mossad-may-have-tried-to-retrieve-spy-eli-cohen-s-body-from-syria-40-years-ago/>
6. <http://jcpa.org/has-the-body-of-israeli-hero-eli-cohen-been-recovered/>

## Review – Did the students understand the material?

1. Why was Eli Cohen such a suitable candidate for this spy position?
2. Eli Cohen was instrumental to Israel's victory in what war?
  - a. War of Independence
  - b. Six Day War (correct)
  - c. Yom Kippur War



- d.** First Lebanon War
- 3.** Eli Cohen worked for:
  - a.** The CIA
  - b.** The MI6
  - c.** The Mossad (correct)
  - d.** The IAF
- 4.** What were some tactics Cohen used to obtain information from the Syrians?
- 5.** What was Cohen's ultimate fate?

## Discussion Questions

- 1.** When Israel [brought back](#) the remains of Zechariah Baumel, as described in our [website](#), Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu [called](#) it one of his “most exciting moments as prime minister.” He vowed to “continue to invest every effort” in the other MIAs and KIAs (killed in action), saying, “We will not cease this holy mission.” Do you agree with the importance of returning the remains of the deceased? If so, why? If not, why not?
- 2.** After viewing this episode, why do you think Eli Cohen has become a national icon in Israel?
- 3.** How far should a person go to serve his or her country? Does this commitment go beyond commitment to family?
- 4.** Of Cohen's accomplishments, which stands out to you the most?

## Reflection Questions

- 1.** Zionist activist Joseph Trumpeldor reportedly said on his deathbed: “*Tov lamut be'ad artzeinu*,” “It's good to die for our country.” Over the years, thousands of people have indeed died serving Israel. Where do you think this inner strength and devotion comes from? Why are people willing to give their very lives for the country?



- 2.** What qualities of Cohen's do you admire and how can you incorporate some of them into your life, even on a small scale?
- 3.** Most people do not end up serving their country by becoming a professional spy. How can you serve your country, or Israel, as a teenager? How can you imagine serving as an adult?
- 4.** If you were to create a hierarchy of personal values, would service to one's country or service to one's family be higher?
- 5.** Eli Cohen was a Mizrahi Jewish spy, but he was not the first Mizrahi Jew to infiltrate the Arab populations. In fact, Friedman's book cited in the "Additional Resources" section above details how the Yishuv recruited Jews from Arab lands to the Palmach's "Arab section," which would become the precursor to the Mossad. These stories have not really been a focus until recently. However, the demographics in Israel are changing, and now over half of Israeli Jews are Mizrahi. How do you think this shapes (or should shape) the stories the Jewish community in Israel and abroad share?