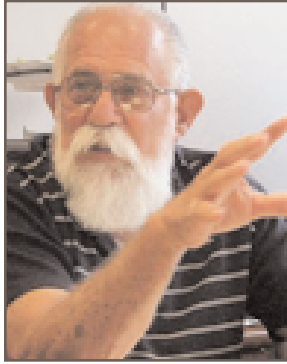


*Katcha*



## *Katcha Speaks to Students*

VIDEO SCRIPT

I was born in Israel; it was called Palestine during those years, 74 years ago. My name is Shimon. Shimon, as you know is one of the tribes that you learn about in the Bible. My family name is Cahaner, which comes from Cohen. But for about 60 years I've had the nickname "Katcha." Katcha doesn't have any meaning, it's just the name the other children gave me, that's all. Many more people know me as Katcha. I'm quite well known in our country, so you can call me Katcha.

I grew up in very critical and important times for our people – the years before the Second World War, before the Holocaust, and after the Holocaust, and before Israel became a country... Israel is a country, but it's also your homeland. So, these years were very important because I was able to experience the process we passed through.

As a child it was my luck to grow up near the beach in Israel, the Mediterranean beach. Opposite from us used to be the place where the boats bringing illegal refugees arrived. These were survivors who came to our country after the Holocaust, and it was against the British laws, then, for them to come. I will not say a lot about it, just; this is one of the reasons that my English is so bad. We had a big conflict with the British government and the British army and the British Governor (about the refugees). As children, we couldn't push the British Governor out of the country, so we pushed the English teacher out of the classroom. Don't do it to your teachers! So I didn't learn any English in school. I really believe, even now, at my age, that the British government did very, very, very bad things to our people then.

And I remember when I was a child, and I couldn't take part as a soldier in battle - for example in 1948, 49, in our War of Independence. I did my best as a child. I used to help the soldiers with jobs that kids can do – to deliver messages, or to sit in the tower to watch the lights – get the Morse code messages from the other villages.

In 1967 I was a deputy battalion commander of the Paratroopers Brigade. Paratroopers in Israel are the best soldiers. You must volunteer to be in this unit, but not everyone can be in it. First of all, you have to volunteer. Second, you must pass hard tests that check if you're fit for this unit. The paratroopers are prepared for any battle they may meet.

In the Six-Day War, I fought in Jerusalem, and I took part in the reunification and liberation of Jerusalem. The battle in Jerusalem was a very special battle. I can't compare it to the other battles that I took part in, like the Yom Kippur War in 1973 when I crossed the Suez Canal with my battalion, the Paratroopers Battalion, and I fought in Egypt. Or in the Lebanon War in 1982, I fought as a brigade commander in Lebanon. But I can't compare these to the battle for Jerusalem.



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The battle for Jerusalem was a very special one because in the battle for Jerusalem I felt that I was stepping into my own history. You can find the same names of the mountains today, the valleys today, and the hills today – you can find the same names from the Bible from 3000 and 500 years ago. It's a very, very special feeling that I felt in my heart and in my soul when I fought for Jerusalem. I'm not a very religious man, but as an Israeli and as a Jewish person, I felt it was very important for me. I remember the minute that I crossed the Lion's Gate, into the Old City of Jerusalem, and I touched the stones of the wall of Jerusalem, of the Old City. I felt it in my fingers and from my fingers to all of my body, to my heart – like electricity! This feeling I have carried with me for more than 41 years, from the time that I fought for Jerusalem until today.

I also want to tell you that when we fought in Jerusalem in the Six-Day War, I didn't fight just for my country, or just for my family or for my friends. I fought for you, for all the Jewish people and for our homeland, Israel.