

The Consummate Diplomat

Yossi Gal

Yossi Gal is the director-general of Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

I still remember the first time I met him; Dave was the new director-general of the ministry, while I was still in a junior position in Washington, long before I ever dreamed of following in his footsteps. I remember that I accompanied him to various meetings. What I learned then I still carry with me today. I remember the thorough preparations for meetings and the emphasis he placed on attention to detail, his fluid language, and the articulate and sensitive way in which he expressed himself.

Dave was an outstanding example of the consummate diplomat and was a role model for me as director-general. Although he did not rise through the ranks of the Foreign Ministry, he expressed through his actions the manner in which one should fulfill one's mission. This was evident in the meticulousness he exhibited in his work and the British gentleman that he was, alongside the assertive person who was attentive to others and who had the ability to see the overall picture. There is no doubt that his security background constituted an important element of his work.

Dave experienced it all—from being the new *oleb* who immigrated to Israel at the age of eighteen, to fighting in Israel's War of Independence and his injury in that war, through to his thirty-year service with the Mossad, and afterward, his six-and-a-half-year stint as director-general of the Foreign Ministry. Six years, for those in the know, is a very long time for someone to serve as a director-general in public service. Of that time, he functioned for more than a year without a foreign minister, when Yitzhak Shamir, who appointed Dave to the position, was elected prime minister and decided to entrust the ministry to Dave's capable hands.

Dave was involved in all the secret political events of that period, from the cultivation of ties with our neighbors, to the advancement of relations with Asia and Africa and more. After he resigned from his post as director-general of the Foreign Ministry, Dave served as the government of Israel's special ambassador, particularly in advancing relations with Eastern Europe.

Dave was one of the pioneers in breaking out of the isolation in which we found ourselves after the severance of relations with the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe,

and the Third World. He left no stone unturned in his attempts to renew those relations, primarily with the continents of Asia and Africa (which ultimately paved the way for relations with China). These relations contributed to the promotion of Israeli companies and organizations that dealt with these continents even after Dave's resignation.

Dave breathed new life into the ministry, and also worked hard to solidify its position with respect to the security and intelligence bodies.

In the name of the Foreign Ministry through the generations—its employees, retirees and directors, in Israel and abroad—I thank him and salute him.

May that dear man go in peace and rest in peace.

Translated from the Hebrew by Yvette Shumacher