Creating the Relevant Response to the Threat: Between the Technical and the Adaptive Response

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This essay discusses the response to the threat at the strategic level and to some extent also the operative level, but does not address the response at the technical or tactical level. Likewise at the tactical level, one must always ask what requires the most attention. On this topic, I have chosen to begin with a conceptualization formulated by Prof. Ronald Heifetz, which distinguishes between three types of problems: technical, semi-technical, and adaptive.

	Identifying problem as technical	Identifying problem as semi-technical	Identifying problem as holistic adaptive challenge
Familiar problem	+	+	?
Familiar solution	+	−	?

For example, when your car won't start, both the problem and the solution are familiar and both are recognized as being technical in nature. There are more complex situations, such as a space shuttle exploding after takeoff. Clearly, the problem is familiar – it blew up. The solution may or may not be known, but we do know that at the end of a technological-professional investigation it will be possible to arrive at a proposed solution. The interesting area is the third column: problems

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that Ronald Heifetz calls adaptive and I call holistic, where the difficulty begins in the very act of identifying the situation as problematic. That is to say, while the situation is familiar, the problem itself might not be known – unlike the car that won't start – so that someone may find himself in a situation in which he is still not aware that he is in trouble, in which case the solution is far from being technical.

So that the use of this conceptualization is clear, consider the following example: at his wedding, a groom was advised to make sure to observe three rules in order to lead a happily married life. He was to bring flowers to his wife every Friday, he was to take her out to a café or a restaurant once a week, and he was to take her out to a concert or the theater once a month. If he gets to the point where his marriage collapses, it should be possible for him to undertake a technical investigation of the situation by recreating the events. Imagine this man saying to his wife in such a situation, "Look, according to my calculations, we're missing 30 café evenings and four concerts. Let's make up the gap; maybe we can cram all of it into this coming week and everything will be fine." However, in this case the situation has likely gotten out of reach of technical intervention. My claim is that in many cases we conduct ourselves at the technical level in an attempt to create a working plan to handle every problem. Take for example the issue of Israel's Arab population: practical people charged with planning and formulating a working program identify discrimination. They analyze the functional parameters that involve discrimination – it could be in land allocation, employment, education, or other fields; they implement the working program; and from that point onwards the problem is handed over to trusted technicians and clerks who are supposed to translate the program into a reality. It is only rarely that anyone will examine the issue holistically-adaptively. The tendency by and large to prefer the linear-analytical and technical approach is often related to an effort to reduce a holistic, adaptive situation to a list of tasks that allow a technical, instrumental management process. Many times this is also true in the analysis of the military-security operative response.

Indeed, at the end of the planning stage, practical people and soldiers such as I have to know how to submit a plan whereby it is possible to organize and build a force. Obviously it is necessary to know how to operate the force, and the operation of force is always based on a concept that takes on an executable shape using components that are in essence

technical. However, I have chosen to focus here on questions that precede the realm of action and these, in my opinion, are at times the most tangible preconditions.

President Anwar Sadat of Egypt and the attack in the Sinai Peninsula can serve as a prime example of a holistic-adaptive response. Sadat had a goal, which he defined as restoring both the Sinai and Egyptian honor. He identified gaps between his armed forces and Israel's capabilities, focusing on the superiority of Israel's air and armored corps. He understood the limitations of his military, internalized them fully, and did not rush to a working plan to gain the Egyptian army symmetrical capability to counter Israel's aerial superiority. He bypassed the problem. He defined a different concept of war, a different concept of strategy. He operated in the holistic-adaptive dimension (according to Ronald Heifetz's schematics) and thereby created a revolution in the realm of war.

Ron Tira's study on the changes in the phenomenon of war[1] clarifies just how profound Sadat's action was: he changed the story of war from a defined concept directed by Western logic of planning backward, from the end to the beginning, and returned it to a concept directed by Arab logic in which there is no basis to a detailed description that conforms to a desired end state. Instead of a pre-defined war goal, his goal was characterized by a desire to set a process in motion, to create friction whereby something would be created and leave the rest to unfold at a later stage. This is a concept focusing on actions designed to create friction, in the hope that such friction will spark change, and with change will come an opportunity for something to happen, a type of change that can be taken advantage of − in this case, to promote Egypt's interests. This, then, is the concept of a war whose entire purpose is directed at creating effective friction. As such, Egypt did not first have to attain aerial capabilities to match Israel's aerial supremacy. In this plan, designed to conquer just a strip east of the Suez Canal, what was needed was an umbrella of aerial defense, which he constructed west of the Canal, and arrays of infantry and anti-tank systems, which he deployed in order to withstand the battering of Israel's armor towards the front line of the Canal. Sadat recognized the limits of his army, internalized them, and bypassed them.

Hizbollah and the Syrian leadership think and operate along similar lines. In attempting to clarify the identification of the problem and providing a response at the operative level, the adaptive way of thinking leads one to interesting places. I will demonstrate this with an example taken from the commentary on the Pentateuch by Rabbi Haim Ben Attar, known as "Or HaHaim Hakadosh," who emigrated from Morocco to Palestine in the eighteenth century. Rabbi Haim Ben Attar provides an insight of strategic thinking on the story of the patriarch Jacob dividing his retinue into two camps in advance of his reunion with his brother Esau. The verse, "the other camp may yet escape" (Genesis 32:9) is usually interpreted at the literal, simple level: Jacob divides his retinue into two camps so as not to have all his eggs in one basket. The Or HaHaim proposes the operative logic that leads to dividing the camp into two. Jacob was struggling with a dilemma: Esau was coming towards him with 400 men. Jacob did not have the means of determining whether Esau was friendly or hostile. Were he not to prepare for war, he would be easy prey to Esau's battle preparedness. On the other hand, should Jacob prepare for war and come armed and equipped at the head of a camp ready for battle, Esau could well retort, "Is this how you greet me after all these years of absence?" The very fact of being armed, then, is liable to lead to undesirable escalation. Therefore he divided the camp into two: the forward camp looked innocent, friendly, and unarmed, while the second camp, just behind, was armed and ready for battle. Thus a type of response is fashioned, which is a response to a dilemma − not a response to Esau's technical advantage coming towards Jacob with 400 men, but a response to the question of the opening point of the meeting, at the very shaping of the encounter. This is a response to an adaptive dilemma, which demands the choice between one of two options (either-or), but Jacob seeks to be prepared both for battle and for a peaceful meeting at the same time. Today, we call this a hybrid solution; the hybrid aspect is deeply embedded in the heart of the systemic rationale.

This is what the Arab armed forces were missing in the wars between 1948 and 1967 − adaptive creativity. This is how Ron Tira in his study explains the IDF's victory in the Six Day War: the big mistake on the Arabs' part, both in 1948 and in 1967, was that their armed forces were constructed and operated mechanically on the basis of rigid criteria and doctrines. A wonderful segment in the movie *Lawrence of Arabia* shows a

meeting between Faisal and Lawrence. Lawrence is explaining to Faisal that if he requests cannons and does what his advisor, a British colonel, tells him, then the most he can achieve is having a well-equipped but mediocre Western army. By contrast, Lawrence notes that Faisal's men excel at desert mobility, riding camels, and using swords. He therefore suggests, "Go with your strength." Until 1967, the Arabs equipped themselves not just with weapons but also with concepts of operation that were foreign to their culture, and in military encounters with Israelis, who were skilled in technology and knew how to operate the industrial machines of war better than they, they always came out on the bottom. This is also the vast difference between Syria's showing in 1973 and Egypt's. In the fighting in the Valley of Tears (Emek HaBacha), the heroism of IDF soldiers was readily apparent, but what decided the battle was the crushing techno-tactical superiority of the Israeli tank operators who stood on ramps and managed to achieve supremacy even though the Israel to Syria force ratio was 1 to 10. The Syrians approached the war with a mechanized Soviet concept and modus operandi that was not suited to their culture and strengths. By contrast, the Egyptians acted in a way that suited the basic mental limitations of their forces. The very ability to internalize this recognition earned them a significant advantage.

According to Tira, the Six Day War was a victory won primarily in the tactical dimension and the success in this dimension guaranteed the success of all the other dimensions. To one extent or another it may be that the problems that arose after the war were also related to the inability to attain a tactical decision and translate it into a strategic one in all dimensions. For example, in World War II a significant decision was achieved in the dimension of national resources. Rommel stated this explicitly in his diaries just before the Normandy landing. He understood very well that from the moment the Allies had a bridgehead on the continent, it was only a matter of time before their armies reached Berlin. Rommel understood that in the battle of resources against the US-led Allies, Germany did not stand a chance.

When we speak of the response and the difficulties in delivering a response, we speak of the ability to present a point of equilibrium that integrates the entire spectrum of dimensions of action. Israel has a concept whose sources lie in the Western cultural environment – the production line model. On the basis of the concept of planning and

managing a production line, there is a basic distinction between the activity of senior management, which has to decide questions of what and how much to produce in order to sell and earn a profit, and the activity of the production and operations managers who have to deal with questions of how to produce and how to manage and operate production. The first question lies in the realm of the human sciences; it is a complex question lacking a geometric calculus. The second question is within the realm of engineering operations, which can be planned and managed by a quantitative geometric calculus. From the operations manager and staff to the production engineers and workers in the production rooms, the system is geometric and linear. In this sense, if the workers come to work on time, if the engineers plan correctly, if the raw materials go into the machines properly, and quality control is at work, then the plant's operations manager has fulfilled what upper management has required of him. Let us assume that he was expected to produce 100 cars a year and the cars are ready and in perfect condition by the due date, fulfilling every standard necessary, but the cars don't sell. What could the plant manager say? "I did my part; my workers were on time! The engineers planned well, I succeeded." The failure or success will be ascribed to a different level, to the market of car buyers, which for some reason changed its taste in cars – i.e., to the realm of human sciences.

The central question is the interface between the technical-engineering realm of the questions given to engineering planning and the other realms. There is a basic belief that says: if I managed to fulfill my commitment in the form of the tasks that were defined for me and I did what I was charged to do, then I fulfilled my duty. To a large extent, this approach is Protestant and Jewish in its modern form: I've done my part and the rest will, with God's help, work out. It is a kind of metaphysical approach whereby if I try with all my might in the areas designated as being within my purview, this will somehow have a positive effect on the events that are not in my control. If I have a sales problem, I will try to work harder so that the workers are more diligent and the machines work faster, because those are the areas where the control is my hands. This is how we try to formulate responses when we do not have the capability of affecting them immediately or through means within our control.

I turn now to the case of Syria. Giora Eiland described a typical dilemma of creating effectiveness for a military action. The fighters

should be there on time, and they should be well equipped and equipped in time, but will all of this ensure that they do the right thing? There are no mathematical rules to answer this question, nor is it a geometric challenge. Both the Winograd and the Agranat Commissions often left us with the statement that the issue "requires further clarification."

The claim that IDF's defense at the Suez Canal in the Yom Kippur War came from people who were unfamiliar with doctrines of war is another example of examining a military event in its mechanical dimensions, akin to checking under the hood of the car that won't start, to look for the malfunctioning engine or fuel injector, to exchange the broken part, and then assume that everything will work just fine. It is hard for me to believe that the problem can be fully explained by "if only they knew doctrines of war." To my mind, this is much too simplistic. There was another story there, and I therefore come back to the question: in recent years, what does the concept of war cultivated in the Syrian military mind look like?

First of all, the Syrians look to Anwar Sadat of 1973 for inspiration. The success of 5 km east of the Suez Canal was achieved, and the rest developed in a political process that culminated with Israel's full withdrawal from the Sinai. In this sense, the Syrians could have a similar concept of war: attacking the civilian rear of Israel with missiles for the purpose of sparking a trend of political agreements culminating in Israel's full withdrawal from the Golan Heights. To this end, Syria is undergoing a structural change in thinking, and the Syrian military has begun to change. Until 2000, its main force, its force of decision, was the ground army, and the second force, the complementary and support force, was the aerial defense system and the surface-to-surface missile systems. In recent years, this balance has shifted: the secondary supporting force has gradually become the force of decision, just as Hizbollah's force of decision and central effort in 2006 lay in its rockets. This transition changes the order of components in the Syrian system; the functions continue to exist but serve a different rationale and with different degrees of dominance.

Operationally speaking, the trend of change can be reflected in the idea of an action like the one described above. The Syrian military with its ground forces is prepared for defense in traditional defense systems – its deployment is blatantly defensive. On the other side, the IDF is prepared defensively because the first act that the IDF performs as a type of default

when the alert level goes up is to declare "metzuda" − deployment in defenses. Syria or Lebanon, through the use of Hizbollah forces, launches rockets into the heart of Israel and the IDF responds aggressively from the air. Neither one of the sides has crossed the border yet. In this situation the question is: who is on the defensive and who is on the offensive? Notwithstanding notions defining defense and offense on the basis of the ground criterion, i.e., which one of the adversaries has crossed a border and entered the territory of its ground adversary, we have mutual use of firepower in the primary incident before us. Therefore, in this situation the border no longer serves a defining purpose. This conundrum was clearly understood in materials prepared by military intelligence leading up to the war in 2006, yet this material, though it was well edited and formulated, seems not to have been internalized by the relevant personnel. The crux of the matter is that we are not just talking about the size of the enemy force and its deployment in an intelligence snapshot, rather about the overall rationale of action. Hizbollah internalized its limitations vis-à-vis the IDF's superiority at ground maneuvers. Thus through the stimulus of the rocket fire and based on the ground defense systems facing an IDF ground attack, Hizbollah leaders hoped to drag the IDF into action in an obsessive Pavlovian manner, i.e., immediately embark on a ground attack in order to move the fighting over to enemy territory and then be caught among the well-prepared defenses.

In response to such a scenario, the IDF must redefine the form of its offensive moves so that it does not find itself playing into the hands of the enemy. This prompts a question that not only the IDF but also the entire military world must tackle: how does one wrest a decision from an enemy that operates with the kind of logic described above? I would like to know what Clausewitz would say about this development where we cannot return to theories from the past regarding offense and defense.

In order to discuss some further questions relating to Israel's proper response, I return to the Egyptian story of October 1973. In the end, the Egyptian military suffered an operational defeat when the Third Army was surrounded. Nevertheless, Egypt's strategic plan was realized in terms of its ability to force a political process in its favor on the State of Israel. I will therefore try to suggest what kind of solution the IDF could have come up with as a relevant response, and I consider this a moral for other situations as well.

Consider the air force's effectiveness in the opening hours of the fighting on the Canal. This question has been extensively examined in Brig. Gen. (ret.) Emanuel Sakel's doctoral thesis. One of the claims by the air force in the days and years following the war was: "If only we had been allowed a preemptive first strike." In my opinion, anyone who wants to construct a relevant response cannot build a response on so shaky a basis as "if only we had been allowed a preemptive first strike." I remember Chief of Staff Shaul Mofaz telling the air force to prepare a preemptive first strike but to understand that there would be serious limitations in getting it approved. As for the matter itself, the air force could have planned a preemptive *parallel* strike in a situation in which the Egyptians would still be the first to open fire and then have the air force attack directly in a widespread attempt to prevent the crossing of the Canal. The problem was that the air force had a rationale of a hierarchical order of actions whereby it was first necessary to achieve aerial supremacy to deal with all manners of aerial defense and the airstrips, and only then make room for missions associated with ground battles. In his thesis, Brig. Gen. Sakel demonstrates that had the air force only examined aerial photographs that were available in the days before the war, it would have been possible to identify the bottlenecks and force concentrations preparing the crossing, including the necessary crossing equipment, in which case the air force could have attacked in the presence of Egyptian aerial defenses with the loss of planes, but achieving a simple objective − preventing the construction of the bridges. The IDF's force at the time was sufficient to allow such a significant systemic achievement to occur at the outset of the war.

That is to say, the response must be examined in relation to the outline of the relevant, operative story, and must also be examined in light of the ability to create the suitable manners of action. The air force must receive organized operations orders and formulate offensive capabilities on the basis of data analysis of the targets. Had the air force operated this way, it could have prevented a significant Egyptian success.

Another matter, obvious with the wisdom of hindsight, has to do with decision making in the operations arena of the Southern Command on the morning the war broke out. Imagine that I go back in time: it is now 6 A.M., and I'm told: "You are commanding the front; tonight or at midday there is going to be a war; the Operation Dovecote deployment will not

succeed, so that by 1 P.M. there will not be a single Israeli soldier left on the waterline." In a scenario of preemptive withdrawal from the line of fortifications, the Egyptians would have found themselves conducting a grand attack on an empty line. The State of Israel would not have lost its fighters, would not have been subject to the humiliation of having its soldiers taken captive, and would not have lost some 200 tanks in heroic but unsuccessful link-up attempts. Sakel notes that he had tank platoons that reached the fortifications, asking whether or not to evacuate the soldiers, and the answer was no. In other words, with regard to the questions had the IDF produced in advance a response that would, operationally speaking, have suited the time when the war broke out and in the absence of the means to present a proper symmetrical response, it is possible that Israel would have emerged on top in the sense that the initiative would have remained in its hands. Even a decision to withdraw in order to preserve force is initiative. Israel would have emerged holding the upper hand in the sense that it may have prevented the realization of the Egyptian desire to humiliate the IDF and refute its image as the unbeatable army.

These events are in my mind as I try to explain that full congruency must exist at all times between tactical excellence and thinking at the highest level, so that the fighters on the field can be sure that the decisions made at the highest echelon are made on the basis of a proper understanding of development at the tactical and operative levels. From my personal acquaintance with soldiers and from comments by soldiers such as Yuval Neriya in his book *Fire*, the main factor that broke our men in the first hours and days of the Yom Kippur War was not the battles themselves or the loss of their comrades but the growing sense that the generals were issuing irrelevant commands.

The IDF is required to provide a relevant, effective response in the face of the complexity affecting many dimensions of action. For example, it is necessary to construct a variety of forces based on the recognition of the need for two main types of force. One is required to provide a mass of widespread force of average professional capability, in the sense that it can fulfill basic tasks of defense, maneuver movements, offense, clearing, and securing an area over time. The second force must be composed of highly skilled professional shock troops. They are the spearhead and as such, are charged with the task associated with what is chosen as central

to wresting a decision in the battle. The construction of force and its operation are directed by the knowledge that this type of excellence will never be a mass phenomenon. In practice, this is how the IDF operates, and such forces were used in Operation Cast Lead. From Operation Defensive Shield onwards, there were series of actions by strike forces trained for their tasks and these forces operated as forces with unique adjustment capabilities. The spirit of this type of action was already present in the War of Independence, and Palmah units used strike forces that were transported from one arena to another to wrest decisions at the system-wide loci of decisions. The other forces gave their full support by providing the critical mass in the general sphere of activity.

Let me mention one example of the change that is taking place in the war arena, which is increasing the need for excellent strike forces. In the Six Day War the enemy was clearly defined and there was no question of who was a civilian and who was a combatant. Ammunition Hill and Givat Hamivtar, for example, were prime military targets. For the fighters, these were fortified targets, familiar from training. It is true that these fortified targets were located in the urban sphere, but the way they were constructed gave the soldiers a sense of familiarity. From the moment they entered the tunnels they thought of the targets as fortified within an open sphere. Then, the fortified target had a generic tactical response that was appropriate to all arenas. Today, the situation is more complex and it is necessary to know how to function while uniquely adjusting the concept of the action and the composition of the force to each and every sector.

Consider the operation that the Egoz Unit carried out in 2004 together with forces from the Golani Brigade near Jenin. Unique, outstanding forces arrived at the target, forces capable of approaching as if they were local Arabs. Their mission was planned according to intelligence; even if the intelligence was not exact enough to know through which window or in which room the terrorist could be found, it was exact enough to be able to define which houses were the focus of the operation. The forces dashed quickly into operation from under the cover of being locals and finally had to insert a fighter into the trench that served the terrorist as a hiding space under the kitchen. These are skills that cannot be taught to the whole army, and it is also unnecessary to do so. However, the ability to carry out such a surgical operation must be taught to forces charged with

these actions. This is a lot like medicine: on a journey to the North Pole, the role of expedition doctor cannot be filled by the best ophthalmologist in the country. Rather, what is needed is a general practitioner who is *average* in many ways. For the specific task at hand, he is the one who *excels*. In other words, it is necessary to define the distinction between certain qualities with which we achieve excellence on the one hand and a broad based capability to support a specific surgical operation on the other. However, it is impossible to construct the entire army on that.

Such a distinction allows a response to a different aspect, which to a large extent is the real test in the new operational environment. The army is constantly examined as to the concrete effectiveness of its force. The moment a force arrives at an event, such as the attempted capture in Atzira Shamali in which three Duvdevan fighters were killed in August 2000, it is defined not just as an operational failure but also as having lacked operational effectiveness. Given the understanding that one operates in an arena in which every point of our showing has strategic weight, it is necessary to demonstrate the appropriate capabilities. In such events, the encounter with the enemy takes place like a screen test where it makes sense to bring in the special virtuosos, but in the general sector there is no need to maintain such people and it is, in any case, impossible to do so. To a large extent, the test of relevance worked also during Operation Cast Lead: the ability to reach focal points that the enemy knows are real military targets is a capability that in the end instills in the enemy's mind a profound understanding of the impact of the IDF's abilities. This is a combination of intelligence in systematic investigative efforts, persevering over a long period of time preceding the operation, and accurate, effective execution at a particular point.

An incident I experienced in one of the attack cells of Operation Cast Lead may illustrate the complex environment in which the IDF operates. The command center of the Hamas Gaza Brigade is located in the home of the brigade commander. Is this a civilian or a military target? On the basis of international laws of war, this is a military target, but a family lives in the house while the lower level serves as a weapons cache. We telephoned his wife and told her we were attacking the house; I was present while the call, which was also recorded, was made. The team included a member of Israel's General Security Services; he was speaking to her in Arabic. She answered, "I am not leaving – I am a *shaheed*." Upon further examination,

it turned out that she was elsewhere and was not speaking from home. At the same moment, another team member announced that this person has a second wife. We called the second wife who gave the same answer, but it turned out, on further investigation, that she too was not speaking from home. We attacked with a small explosive charge and a few people fled the premises, and then we attacked the building. This is an event that demonstrates effectiveness. The central question, which to a large extent is the real test in such an environment, is how to attain effective functioning when the enemy intentionally causes the IDF to attack targets that will delegitimize the Israeli army.

Prof. Edward Luttwak explains the issue of legitimacy by using the law of conservation of energy and the law of conservation of matter. He claims that the amount of legitimacy is finite and it may be found either on one side or on the other. By means of the law of connected vessels, legitimacy passes from one side to another. The moment Israel attacked from the air, its legitimacy passed to the other side. Without the aerial attack, legitimacy would have remained on the Israeli side. According to Luttwak, it is necessary to distinguish between internal and international legitimacy. If more Israeli soldiers are killed than society can tolerate, it is a concern for internal legitimacy, but then Israel wins international legitimacy. In his opinion, Israel must consider if it is not better off losing legitimacy internally in order to win legitimacy internationally.

In response to Luttwak's claim, I find it important to explain that the loss of fighters is not just the loss of internal legitimacy but damage to the IDF's image of operational effectiveness, and the IDF must not come to a point of friction and clash with the enemy without being able to present convincing operational effectiveness. The meaning of such effectiveness is that when the forces meet at the tactical level, the result will unequivocally demonstrate that we hold the upper hand. The IDF works extensively on the ability of its large force to realize effective actions in the very first hours of war; effectiveness in this context means the ability of ordnance to reach the proper place and achieve convincing offensive results.

To conclude I have chosen to discuss Israel's need for both internal and external legitimacy, because Israel is always under scrutiny internally. Prof. Avi Saguy, who claims to have been involved in the formulation of the IDF's code of ethics,[2] is one of the IDF's critics for its methods because

the IDF, in his opinion, is not attentive enough to moral considerations. In my opinion, the main topic of both the Goldstone report and Saguy's critique, beyond the discussion on the international arena, is an internal Israeli and Jewish one. This is not to dismiss the international discussion, but we must clarify for ourselves what we did to ourselves by coming to the land of Israel and assuming sovereignty. Anita Shapira recounts the difficulty of the Jewish community's leadership during the 1936-39 Arab Revolt, the "events" as they were called by the Jewish community, in accepting the actions carried out by Orde Wingate:

> The transition from defense to offense entailed a psychological reversal. Up until this point, the hostile encounter between Arab and Jew was usually initiated by the Arab. Now the Jews were turning into the initiators of such activity. While ideology continued to distinguish between "good" and "bad" Arabs, the encounter in the field or the Arab village was built on violence between Jew and Arab, which highlighted the totality of the national confrontation...These actions, said the Jews in the settlements, are suited to the British army but are not suitable to our people. And Wingate had trouble getting support from those settlements.[3]

Our question is thus bound up in the history of Zionism and also relates to the question of whether the State of Israel should represent a special type of sovereignty without resorting to real use of the sword. On this issue, Avraham Burg has written some very harsh remarks:

> Why do we always have a somewhat sour taste in our mouth? Why is it that precisely when the world is finally starting to use the discourse of Jewish morality and is finally starting to act on the principles we have always preached, why is it that precisely then we feel that something is not OK from our perspective? And now that it's happening, we're not pleased. Why? Perhaps because of the simple, painful reason that the world is turning our demand on it around on us: the world is demanding that we act according to the same criteria we demanded of it. And that is inconvenient just at the moment we have discovered power and its resultant enjoyment: to beat up and smash the Gentiles without being held accountable. The time it took for us, for the first time in our lives, to taste revenge – now, of all times,

does the world have to turn Jewish? Repents and becomes righteous? It's not fair, it's not OK.[4]

The question is: what is Burg really offering us? I found an answer in a book written by Rabbi Eliyahu Benamozegh, a Jew of Moroccan heritage who was the rabbi of Livorno, Italy in the nineteenth century, and who wrote his *Morale Juive et Morale Chrétienne* (*Jewish and Christian Ethics*) in French at the request of the Alliance Israélite Universelle. According to Rabbi Benamozegh, there is not a single nation in the world required in its sovereign conduct to obey Christian morality. In light of this, I would suggest that we clarify for ourselves if we have not come to the point at which the only nation in the world being asked to obey and conduct itself on the basis of Christian evangelical morality is none other than the country of the Jews and that we conduct the discussion amongst ourselves, as Jews. The foresight in his analysis is fascinating:

> Let them try and see if they can apply this principle to the nations − the principle of forgiving insults, precisely at the point where it seems that Christianity rises to heights loftier than any seen in the past. Let the nations be required to conduct themselves according to the principles of humility, tolerance, forbearance, and forgiveness found so abundantly in the Gospels. Let the nations dare to turn the other cheek to slaps and spittle and to swallow it all in silence and even repay with the kindness the most horrible affronts − what then? If a homeland's existence and the state's right to exist are possible and the term nationalism is not empty of meaning, the Gospels and Gospel morality can never serve as the law of nations. Why? Because the nation is charged with fewer obligations than the individual, because the scope and number of obligations decrease the larger the social grouping.[5]

In order to explain the matter in the simplest way I will draw on my own experience. When I was a soldier, following the Yom Kippur War, I was among the last to be released home. It came to a point that my mother sent a letter, which by chance ended up with me, to the battalion commander, the late Amir Yaffe. She wrote the commander asking why everyone was already at home while I was not. It was already after Hanukkah and I said to myself: why should I argue with the soldiers about whose turn it is to go home. Already when I was a company commander, I understood that I could no longer act on the basis of the criteria that had

guided me as a soldier. I had a responsibility towards my soldiers. I am allowed to impose on myself a pattern of conceding my rights but not on others. My duty to them obligated me to fight others for their rights. The moment someone becomes responsible for something outside himself, the environment in which he operates is always one of struggle, and in this struggle the rules are different. The saying "seek peace and pursue it" is, in my opinion, applicable to the individual, in the space between one person and another, but it cannot serve as a commandment dictating the conduct of a nation. The nation has interests and nations interact on the fundamental basis of a continual struggle for interests. The guiding rationale does not allow for a simple existence of "seek peace and pursue it."

Here I come back to Goldstone and the schematics presented at the beginning based on Ronald Heifetz's approach. It is right for the army and the institutions to relate to the details of every one of the claims in the report, but in the final analysis the problem is vastly more essential and general and cannot be summarized by factual questions such as did or did not the IDF destroy wells or flour mills. One side will claim it did; the other will deny and prove it didn't. Rather, the question is fundamental: is the state of the Jews obligated by an ideal, evangelical morality whose criteria are applied only to it? This question must first of all be clarified among the Jews and is in fact currently undergoing such clarification. When discussing the question of how to conduct a military action that may be presented as a rational and relevant response, all of these considerations form part of the picture. In this sense, the IDF is in the right place in terms of its ability simultaneously to produce an effective response with surgical virtuosity, i.e., operate discretely and proportionately, and produce a larger scope response where necessary and employ force with great intensity. In any case, and as with regard to questions arising from a close reading of the Goldstone report, it will remain necessary to maintain the ability to distinguish between issues that are essentially technical, e.g., in the form of a legal clarification of evidentiary rules, and other issues that lie in the adaptive-holistic sphere, for example, in the guise of a fundamental discussion on the state and its security, and the essence of the phenomenon of war and the changes taking place in it.

Anita Shapira opens her book *The Sword of the Dove* with a quotation from Heinrich Heine: "One Jew said to another, 'I was too weak!' This statement may serve as a motto for a book on the history of Judaism." To paraphrase her words, I wrote my own version for the discussion of the Goldstone report: "One Jew said to another, 'Was I too strong?' This statement may serve as a motto for a book on the history of Zionism."

Notes

1   Ron Tira, *The Nature of War: Conflicting Paradigms and Israeli Military Effectiveness* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2010).
2   Avi Saguy, "A Time to Investigate," *Haaretz*, December 14, 2009.
3   Anita Shapira, *The Sword of the Dove: Zionism and Power 1881-1948* (Tel Aviv: 1992), pp. 342-43.
4   Avraham Burg, *Defeating Hitler* (Tel Aviv: 2007), p. 143.
5   Eliyahu Benamozegh, *Morale Juive et Morale Chrétienne* (translated into Hebrew by Eliyahu Zinni), Or Veyeshua Yeshiva, p. 68.