Introduction

A few years ago, Professor Uzi Rabi, the director of the Dayan Center at Tel Aviv University, invited me to join him at a meeting with a senior British political figure. Although this was during the Arab Spring, the guest had a request unrelated to current affairs: He wanted to hear a lecture about Moshe Dayan from an Israeli scholar. Rabi, knowing I had spent time researching Moshe Dayan, asked me to brief the guest. At the end of a short lecture and brief question-and-answer period, I was bold enough to ask our guest, surrounded by a large entourage, why he was so interested in Dayan. "Granted, he's a historic figure," I said, "but your itinerary is busy and surely you have more burning issues to deal with during your visit to Israel."

He answered:

> Long ago, when I was a young student in a seminar at Oxford, we were asked to select a military leader we considered one of the best of the twentieth century, present that leader in class, and justify our selection. I picked Moshe Dayan, a choice that aroused heated debate among the students. I therefore wanted to take advantage of this opportunity to hear the opinion of an Israeli scholar familiar with Dayan, who, from the time I was young, has always fascinated me.

This anecdote is but one example of the extent to which Moshe Dayan has aroused the interest of scholars and politicians and fired their imaginations to this day. Although many years have passed since his death, this fascination continues, not only in Israel, but throughout the world.

This book explores various aspects of Moshe Dayan, one of the most influential individuals in the history of Israel's first decades of existence as a modern state. At the same time, Dayan is also one of Israel's most controversial historic figures, although even his fiercest critics would not deny his profound impact on Israel's development. In fact, Dayan's story is the story of the state of Israel and of Zionism. To a large extent, his personal achievements, along with his lowest points, correspond to Israel's accomplishments and failures during the state's first three decades. While never prime minister, as chief of staff, defense minister, and foreign minister, Dayan shaped the

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principles of Israel's security and foreign affairs policies on an array of key issues, most still relevant to this day.

This work is not just another biography of Moshe Dayan. The many biographies about him can fill several shelves.[1] Dayan himself wrote much, including a detailed autobiography and other books.[2] Family members and long-time close associates also wrote about him, adding further dimensions to our understanding of his personality and personal philosophy.[3] One work even attempts to psychoanalyze Dayan, in order to fathom the secret of his charm and the motivations for his actions.[4]

What distinguishes this book is its focus on Dayan as a strategist, seeking to understand his way of thinking through the prism of theory and practice. Because Dayan dealt with strategy for most of his life and operated on the strategic level as both a military leader and a statesman, examining his decisions and actions through the strategic dimension and the corresponding theory can demystify the man and provide insight into his character and his actions.

Dayan's public image changed considerably over the years, due chiefly to the Yom Kippur War, in which Dayan played a central role, and the criticism of Israel's leadership and conduct during it. But, above all, the change in public perception about Dayan reflects the changes in Israeli society's values. Dayan wasn't merely another soldier or politician: He was the very embodiment of the sabra – the new Jew emerging in his own land, self-made, holding a hoe in one hand and a rifle in the other. A no-nonsense man lacking conventional

[1] Some biographies written about Moshe Dayan include Yehuda Harel, *Hamatzbi vehamedinai: Moshe Dayan* (Hebrew), Tel Aviv: Moked, 1968; Naphtali Lau-Lavie, *Moshe Dayan: A Biography*, London: Valentine Mitchell, 1968; Aryeh Hashaviya, *Ayin ahat lemars: Moshe Dayan – korot hayav* (Hebrew), Tel Aviv: Ahiasaf, 1969; Shabtai Teveth, *Moshe Dayan: Biografia* (Hebrew), Tel Aviv: Schoken, 1971; Avner Falk, *Moshe Dayan: Ha'ish veha'agada – biografia psikho'analitit* (Hebrew), Jerusalem: Kaneh Publishing, 1985; Robert Slater, *The Life of Moshe Dayan*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991; Ehud Ben-Ezer, *Omets: Sipuro shel Moshe Dayan* (Hebrew), Tel Aviv: Defense Ministry Publishers, 1997; Martin van Creveld, *Moshe Dayan*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2004; Mordechai Bar-On, *Moshe Dayan: Korot hayav 1915–1981* (Hebrew), Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 2014.

[2] Dayan's autobiographies: Moshe Dayan, *Avnei derekh: Autobiografia* (Hebrew), Jerusalem: Idanim, 1976. The book was published also in English as Moshe Dayan, *Story of My Life*, New York: Da Capo Press, 1976; Moshe Dayan, *Yoman maarekhet Sinai* (Hebrew), Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1977; Mordechai Naor (ed.), *Moshe Dayan: Mikh'tvei ahava* (Hebrew), Tel Aviv: Yedioth Ahronoth Publishers, 2016.

[3] Books and other works his relatives and close associates have written include Ruth Dayan and Helga Dudman, *Ve'oulay . . . Sipura shel Ruth Dayan* (Hebrew), Jerusalem: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1973; Yael Dayan, *Avi, bito* (Hebrew), Jerusalem: Idanim, 1986; Neora Barnoah-Matalon, *Makom tov batsad* (Hebrew), Tel Aviv: Kotarim Publishers, 2009; in the autobiographical series by Assi Dayan, "Hahayim kishmu'a" ("Life as a Rumor") (Hebrew) (trilogy), the first chapter deals with the relationship between Assi and his father, Moshe Dayan.

[4] Falk, *Moshe Dayan*.

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etiquette, Dayan was known to be gruff, even outrageous, caring nothing for the limits of authority, hierarchies, and regulations. This attitude, however, often led to great achievements. And he had personal charm to spare, along with a sharp sense of humor. Always in touch with everything happening on the ground, Dayan's approach was highly practical while always looking to the future. Although deeply rooted in the past and the history of the Jewish people, his life's work was building his renewed homeland, aspiring to help ensure the successful future of the state. He became an ideal and an Israeli hero, as well as a well-known international brand.

However, in recent decades, many of Dayan's traits, once considered emblematic of a man of his time and highly praised, became negative symbols. His self-confidence was suddenly reinterpreted as arrogance, a sense of superiority that led to a traumatic national disaster. Dayan's long-time political camp, having lost power and its national hegemony, became subject to harsh criticism. Moreover, the Israeli sabra figure, which he represented more than anyone else, became a negative symbol, a legitimate target for censure by groups promoting a new national agenda. These groups rejected the Ashkenazi, secular, chauvinist, bellicose, and boastful Israeli who controlled everything and saw himself as above the law – everything that Dayan seemed to stand for. Although Dayan later joined the rival political camp and played an important part in achieving peace with Egypt, Israel's greatest foe, the dramatic reversal of his once-glowing political image remained unchanged, quite possibly because of profound changes in Israeli society.

Nonetheless, even after the passage of time, Dayan still deserves to belong to the pantheon of Israel's great leaders. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu recalled the words of the late President Shimon Peres:

> Late at night at one of our many meetings at the President's House, I asked him, "Tell me, Shimon: from the heights of your lofty age, which of Israel's leader do you admire [the most]?" . . . In that conversation, he mentioned Rabin, Begin, and others, with, I must say, real appreciation for the unique contribution each of them made. But he surprised me a bit when he mentioned another man: Moshe Dayan. Shimon spoke of his courage in battle, his originality, and other traits. "Moshe," he said, "didn't give a hoot what anyone thought of him. Dayan completely ignored political considerations. He was what he wanted to be."[5]

Indeed, in complete contrast to his controversial public image in Israel, experts in Israel and throughout the world continue to consider Dayan one of the twentieth century's greatest military leaders. Richard Simpkin, for example, one of the most important post-World War II British military

[5] Full text of Benjamin Netanyahu's eulogy for Shimon Peres, *Times of Israel*, September 30, 2016. At: www.timesofisrael.com/full-text-of-benjamin-netanyahus-eulogy-for-shimon-peres.

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thinkers, describes him as a "great military leader, head and shoulders above all his contemporaries."[6] Experienced and renowned military leaders and experts have echoed this opinion.[7] Books of military history citing the greatest military leaders of all time include Moshe Dayan as Israel's only representative.[8] Thus, several questions arise. First, what about Dayan makes so many military experts consider him the most important military leader in modern Israel's history? On what is his reputation as a military leader based, and is this reputation justified? Arguably, the gaps between public opinion and expert assessments of Dayan's historic contribution stem from Israelis' resentment about the Yom Kippur War and their difficulty in forgiving the colossal blunders surrounding it. Public criticism also included the entire generation of state founders, of which Dayan was a prominent representative. Foreign experts in leadership and strategy possibly examine Dayan from a different perspective and thus see him in the broader historical context of military leaders.

"Politics is the art of the possible," said Otto von Bismarck, the chancellor who united Germany. This can also apply to strategy, in which the components of planning and acting are rooted in the tension between the goals and the possible means of attaining them. The art of strategy, then, involves the ability to realize ambitious yet realistic ends, as every plan must weigh the limits of both the means and few methods of action available. Thus, the art lies in the greatest maximization possible. This aptly reflects Dayan as a military leader and as a statesman who operated in the world of strategy for most of his adult life. The compass that steered him was clear: ensuring the State of Israel's existence, security, and well-being. Attaining this objective demanded constant effort marked by adaptiveness, flexibility, and creativity to provide a response to a changing and emerging reality. For Dayan, there was no one single ideological or metatheoretical model, only an ever-changing reality posing new challenges to be addressed.

This book, then, is not a conventional biography covering all aspects of Dayan's life in chronological order. Rather, it focuses on Dayan's development as a military leader and statesman, seeking to understand the "Dayanesque" modus operandi and role as a historic figure, asking the following questions: How was his worldview shaped? How did he change over the years? What remained constant and what was in flux? How did he make decisions? How did he learn? It also explores political security challenges and fields in which he was involved, many still relevant today, including counterterrorism; military

[6] Richard Simpkin, *Race to the Swift: Thoughts on Twenty-First Century Warfare*, London: Brassey's, 1985, p. 305.

[7] Cf. Julian Thompson, "Foreword," in Martin van Creveld, *Moshe Dayan*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2004, pp. 11, 14.

[8] E.g. Nigel Cawthorne, *100 Great Military Leaders: History's Greatest Masters of Warfare*, London: Arcturus Publishing, 2003.

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innovation; building military forces; military morale and values; political–military relations and planning military campaigns; Israel's relationship with its neighbors; ruling occupied territories; and Israel as a small state facing large powers. In this sense, understanding Dayan's strategic approach can contribute to our ability to tackle today's challenges.

Dayan is considered the most enigmatic and most difficult to decipher among his generation's leaders, whose ideological and political considerations were clear to all. This makes the many debates about him more understandable. The historian Michael Oren described it well:

> When I research distinguished historical leaders, I get to know them fairly intimately . . . But Dayan is an exception . . . the more I learned about him, the less I felt I knew about him. He was a man of polar opposites – stirred and cold, creative and narrow-minded, fearless and cowardly, whose mind was capable of holding much more than two contrary opinions simultaneously . . . With historic decisions, such as whether or not to conquer the Old City or the Golan Heights, he went from fierce opposition to unconditional support in a matter of hours, literally . . . Moshe Dayan left behind a controversial legacy . . . He was a leader of a stature not found anywhere in today's Middle East: the architect of Israel's most brilliant victory and of the later peace accords with Egypt, but also an expert at political intrigues and brazen shows of force. Behind his trademark, the black patch over his eye, hid an inaccessible mystery.[9]

This book's use of the strategic prism sheds light on hidden areas of Dayan's thoughts, enhancing our understanding of his character against the background of the challenges of his time. Unfortunately, as noted, many of the issues he grappled with continue to plague us to this day. Learning more about his strategies and coping mechanisms for facing them may help contemporary policymakers and strategists in meeting the challenges of the modern era.

What Is Strategy?

The word strategy has become increasingly prevalent in recent decades in multiple disciplines, including business, the media, public relations, and, of course, politics. Advisors in these fields call themselves strategic consultants, seeking to project prestige and respectability with the word "strategic." A senior government advisor once handed me his business card, identifying himself as a "Tactical Consultant." He explained that in a marketplace saturated with strategic consultants, he felt it was necessary to set himself apart.

One way to understand strategy is through the triangular concept of ends, means, and ways, and their interrelation, or as a process whose objective is

[9] Michael Oren, *Six Days of War: June 1967 and the Making of the Modern Middle East* (in Hebrew translation), Or Yehuda: Dvir, 2004, pp. 393–394.

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attaining a relative advantage over rivals and preventing them from making any gains. A zero-sum game.

The term strategy developed in the context of war and its relationship with statesmanship and has been used in various ways in different cultures.[10] Carl von Clausewitz (1780–1831), considered the most important philosopher of war, analogized warfare and commerce as two human activities involving clashing interests. He viewed war as part of politics, which he considered a type of commerce, writing, "Politics is the womb in which war develops."[11] The Chinese leader Mao Tse-Tung (1893–1976) later echoed this sentiment: "War is politics with bloodshed while politics is war without bloodshed."[12] Clausewitz may have said it best: "War is merely the continuation of policy by other means," an adage familiar to every military officer and student of diplomacy and security. Clausewitz also defined strategy in a more limited way as "the use of battles to win the war."[13] Thus, his main contribution was not his use of the term strategy, but clarifying the relationship between war and politics and emphasizing that the goal of war is imposing one's will on the enemy.[14]

The narrow definition of strategy began expanding in the mid nineteenth century, due to political, technological, and social changes then unfolding in the West that transformed the nature of war. As the scope of military confrontation grew, the term strategy expanded and came to include a political rationale, mirroring Clausewitz's explanation that war was driven by policy

[10] The etymology of the word is the ancient Greek *strategos*, meaning army commander. A related word is *strategemon* (stratagem in English), meaning trick. The distinction between strategy – the way a military leader defends his homeland and defeats the enemy – and tactics – the total of principles facilitating the organization of a mass of armed men and moving them in certain directions, was first made during the reign of Justinian I (483–565 CE). However, many texts continued to use strategy for tactical and technical descriptions, and the distinction remained unclear. Until the French Revolution, few distinguished between strategy and tactics, referring simply to "military matters." In fact, texts in this field were primarily instructional materials for military leaders – collections of principles on managing a campaign. The French philosopher Jacques-Antoine-Hippolyte, Comte de Guibert (1743–1790) was one of the first who distinguished between tactics and "grand tactics." Shortly thereafter, Byzantine texts were translated into French and the word strategy came into use as part of the hierarchic distinction between tactics and strategy. Beatrice Heuser, *The Evolution of Strategy: Thinking War from Antiquity to the Present*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, pp. 4–5.

[11] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984, p. 149.

[12] Mao Tse-Tung, *Mao's Selected Works*, Vol. II, Section 64, Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1967, p. 153.

[13] Clausewitz, *On War*, p. 6.

[14] Ibid., p. 6. "Politics" and "policy" are close cognates, as politics is the means to implement policies.

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and was, in fact, integral to it. Early twentieth-century military thinkers further pursued the connection between military force and political achievement in the wake of dramatic changes in the nature of war. The British military theorist B. H. Liddell Hart (1895–1970) defined strategy as "the art of distributing and *applying military means* to fulfil the ends of policy,"[15] which, in its various forms, is the most commonly used definition in military literature.

Historically, countless figures, such as Alexander the Great and Napoleon, held military and political roles simultaneously. Such leaders had a political vision, dictated the strategy to fulfill that vision, and led military campaigns and the battles, some of them – Alexander comes to mind – actively fighting alongside their soldiers. However, some modern developments have led to the separation between the civilian echelon, which sets the political objectives, and the military echelon, which translates these into military objectives. Other changes include the creation of much larger armies together with increased specializations and technologies, and, in terms of knowledge and expertise, the distinction between those who manage the battle, the campaign, the theater of operations, and finally the political outcome. This has resulted in the differentiated levels of strategy accepted in contemporary military doctrine.

Levels of Strategy

Liddell Hart coined the phrase "grand strategy" to describe the level superseding strategy.[16] Grand strategy integrates all of a nation's components of power to attain political goals.[17] Literature further divides this into levels of war or levels of strategy referring to hierarchic layers of action. All these levels are part of the phenomenon of war, and the division between them reflects each one's unique characteristics and emphases. The highest level, then, is grand strategy, involving broad issues of war and peace for which the political echelon, aided by the professional echelon, is responsible. Historian Hal Brands defined grand strategy as:

> The intellectual architecture that gives form and structure to foreign policy . . . a purposeful and coherent set of ideas about what a nation seeks to accomplish, and how it should go about it . . . It requires a clear understanding of the nature of the international environment, a country's highest goals and interests within that environment, the primary threats

[15] In Heuser, *The Evolution of Strategy*, p. 8 (my emphasis).

[16] This section is based on a textbook written by Dr. Eado Hecht called *Musagei yesod bemilhama uvetsava* (Fundamental Concepts in War and the Military) (Hebrew), IDF Staff & Command College Press, 2010, which is used in various IDF courses. The author would like to thank Dr. Hecht for his permission to use the material.

[17] Ibid., p. 9. Earlier, the nineteenth-century Swiss military thinker Antoine Henri de Jomini used the phrase "military policy" – "la politique militaire" – to distinguish between this level and others.

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> to those goals and interests, and the ways that finite resources can be used for the competing challenges and opportunities.[18]

To manage a conflict, decision-makers have a range of means at their disposal: overt and covert diplomacy, which operates through compromise or force (threat to harm an opponent by one of these means); overt and covert propaganda (psychological warfare); economic policy (providing economic benefits or imposing boycotts); and the use of violence (war) or the threat of using it. Decision-makers may use multiples means, often simultaneously, and changing methods as needed.

The (military) strategy level focuses on the connection between force utilization (means) and political achievements (goals). Strategy theorist Colin Gray compared strategy to a bridge between policy (and politics) and war.[19] War-related issues determined at the national political level include: Against whom will the war be waged? What are the war's objectives? What is the scope of resources needed? What is the timing, and who will dictate it? Who are possible allies? What are the constraints (international, moral, legal)?

Ideally, the senior military echelon refers to the political echelon's decisions on these questions, clarifying the military achievement needed to realize the political goal. The military echelon then recommends to the political echelon military goals intended to persuade the enemy to submit to political demands to avoid paying a military price. Military goals can include damaging enemy capabilities, taking territorial control, eliciting certain enemy responses, or deterrence from certain actions (for example, on April 7, 2017, two US Navy ships fired Tomahawk missiles from an air-force base in Homs, Syria, to deter Assad's regime from continuing to use chemical weapons). Often, a combination of these alternatives is applied.

The military strategic echelon also determines the location of the military action and the sequence of operations in different theaters, such as where the main effort will initially be applied and where thereafter (graduated efforts). Alternatively, they may decide to apply equal efforts simultaneously in more than one theater (parallel efforts). These decisions about the order of importance of theaters and timing affect resource allocation in each theater at every stage of the war (thus, in the Yom Kippur War, because the Syrian front was initially determined to be more important than the Egyptian front, the main efforts and reserve forces were directed there on the second day of the war). Other strategic decisions of the military echelon may include the order of importance of the strategic goals in each geographical theater (which can change during fighting); the sequence of attaining them (serially or

[18] Hal Brands, *What Good Is Grand Strategy: Power and Purpose in American Statecraft from Harry S. Truman to George W. Bush*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014, p. 3.

[19] Colin Gray, *The Strategy Bridge: Theory for Practice*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2010, p. 29.

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simultaneously); and matching military resources to each front or theater commander based on the strategic goals and the operational circumstances (constraints dictated to the commander, the preferred manner of fighting, the scope and type of forces available, and more). The level – operational – refers to strategic operation, involving all operational and administrative activities associated with achieving the defined strategic goal in a given theater. When there are multiple strategic goals for a theater, several parallel operations may be conducted to attain them. In the IDF, the regional commands, Southern, Central and Northern commands, are responsible for the operational level.[20]

The last level is the art of managing the battle – tactics.[21] A battle is the actual fighting, conducted by the force encountering enemy forces, and including force actions at the edges of the battlefield. The typical mission of a tactical commander is to destroy or repel a defined enemy force.

The grand strategy is therefore the upper level, targeting all the other levels, deciding if the gamut of actions at the other levels will in fact improve the nation's political and security situation.[22]

Levels of success are not always closely related. Successive tactical victories do not guarantee operational success. For example, Rommel's tactical successes in the Western Desert in 1942 did not defeat of the British at the operational level because of his poor logistics. With every tactical advance lengthening his supply lines, each step forward actually led inexorably to his defeat. The relationships between the tactical, operational, and grand strategy levels are complex, especially when military results are intertwined with other factors, including diplomacy, the economy, the media, and public opinion. This is particularly evident in the context of a small nation dependent on the interests of the world's great powers. For example, while Israel had a clear military advantage at the end of the Yom Kippur War, it had to agree to ceasefire concessions because of US pressure.

Every military leader's most significant challenge is ensuring that one level of success contributes to success of the next: Tactical success must translate into operational success, and so on. The difficulty in linking the levels arises in part from strategy's paradoxical and fickle nature.

While common sense guides most social activities, strategic considerations are paramount in conflict situations, the operative logic differing from, perhaps even completely defying, conventional logic. Strategy, then, is characterized by "paradox, contradiction, and irony,"[23] its singular logic driven by the existence

[20] *Torat hamivtsa'im hameshutafim* (General Headquarters) (Hebrew), November 2006, p. 28.

[21] Military doctrine refers to another, lower level: the technotactical. It includes the military techniques and team drills of the soldiers and a few weapons systems.

[22] Edward N. Luttwak, *Strategy: The Logic of War and Peace*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001, p. 208.

[23] Ibid., p. xii.

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of the enemy seeking to disrupt each of your moves and prevent you from attaining your goals, thereby enabling the enemy to achieve their goals, which are contrary to yours and could even involve your obliteration. As Martin van Creveld has observed: "That opponent is allowed not just to try to achieve his objective but to actively prevent you from doing the same . . . it a question of trying to detect, predict, interfere with and obstruct the opponent."[24]

The ancient Roman saying, "Si vis pacem, para bellum" – "If you want peace, prepare for war" – well reflects the paradoxical dimension aspects of strategic thinking. While conventional logic views the straight, paved, short, and illuminated road as the best route between Points A and B, strategic logic often finds the long, twisting, difficult, and dark road preferable, simply because the enemy may not be expecting you there. The military thinker Edward Luttwak argues that creating a surprise can provide an advantage but may weaken your overall power by splitting forces. Advancing into the enemy's territory while winning victories necessarily leads to longer supply lines, which weaken the winner while strengthening the defeated side (Nazi Germany in World War II and, Napoleon in 1812, both in Russia, being prime examples).[25] The defeated side often learns better, thus improving its chances in the future.[26]

Strategy represents multiple opposing options with differing advantages and disadvantages, much like the children's game Rock, Paper, Scissors: The uncertainty of your enemy's choice makes your choice so difficult. Van Creveld identifies such dilemmas at the campaign and tactical levels, including adhering to the goal versus flexibility, reserving forces versus pitching them into battle, concentrating forces versus dispersing them, the indirect versus the direct approach, advance versus retreat.[27] Colin Gray adds dilemmas in the field of strategy, such as attrition versus decision, conquest versus raid, using force versus enforcement by other means (e.g., economic sanctions), offense versus defense.[28] The essence of the art of strategy is deciding on the strategy while adapting it to a given reality or strategic context.

The Phenomenon of Friction and Its Effect on the Strategic Act

The second factor affecting the execution of the strategy is friction, a term used by Clausewitz to explain why he characterized war as the realm of uncertainty; this concept is among Clausewitz's most important contributions to military theory.[29] According to Clausewitz, friction explains why situations in war

[24] Martin van Creveld, *Wargames: From Gladiators to Gigabytes*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013, p. 3.
[25] Luttwak, *Strategy*, pp. 17–18.
[26] Ibid., p. 57.
[27] Martin van Creveld, *More on War*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017, pp. 101–109.
[28] Gray, *The Strategy Bridge*, p. 66.
[29] Clausewitz, *On War*, p. 101.

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rarely develop according to plan. Friction seems to operate like Murphy's Law – anything that can go wrong will.[30] Nor is friction random; rather, it is a structural phenomenon inherent in the situation. Indeed, "everything in war is very simple, but the simplest thing is difficult. The difficulties accumulate and end by producing a kind of friction that is inconceivable unless one has experienced war."[31] Clausewitz concluded that friction "is the only concept that more or less corresponds to factors that distinguish real war from war on paper."[32] Even small, seemingly trivial disruptions could disrupt the best plan.

Clausewitz understood war as an unpredictable phenomenon that cannot be controlled in the conventional meaning of the word. Never complete or perfect in battle, war always generates unpredictable mistakes and gaps of information and understanding. Some claim that improved capabilities based on innovative technologies of information gathering and analysis may potentially help clear the fog of war by reducing friction's effects.[33] However, the human mind's ability to process information is limited, and this ability diminishes even more when people are under pressure. Moreover, the capabilities of digital information technologies may very well be offset by their inherent complexity. Even when new technologies generate the hoped-for achievements, these then require more resources and attention to their maintenance, thereby creating yet another source of friction.[34] Consequently, even in this age of information, friction will continue to be a disruptive factor.[35]

Overcoming Friction: Strategy as a System of Exploiting Opportunities

Helmuth Karl Bernhard Graf von Moltke (the Elder)[36] was a Prussian field marshal, serving for thirty-one years in the Prussian and then German army (following Germany's 1871 unification) (1857–1888). He shaped the German Army, which, under his leadership, became the foremost military force in the world at the time and led the army to decisive victories in three important campaigns.[37]

[30] Ibid., p. 119.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Bill Owens, *Lifting the Fog of War*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2000, p. 15.
[34] Jacob W. Kipp and Lester W. Grau, "The Fog and Friction of Technology," *Military Review* 81:5 (September–October 2001), pp. 88–97 (p. 89).
[35] David Betz, "The More You Know the Less You Understand," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 29:3 (June 2006), pp. 505–533.
[36] To distinguish him from his nephew Helmuth Johann Ludwig von Moltke, called "the Younger," who also served as chief of staff of the German army from 1906 until 1914.
[37] The wars of unification, also known as the wars of German unification: the campaign against Denmark in 1864, the campaign against the Austrian Empire in 1866, and, most importantly, the campaign against Napoleon III's French Empire in 1870–1871. Among Moltke's achievements was the refining and development of the general staff into its

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Like Clausewitz, whom he admired, Moltke believed in the effect of friction on war.[38] Perceiving war as a fluid, elusive phenomenon, and viewing the sphere of strategy as involving more art than science, Moltke wrote:

> Strategy affords tactics the means for fighting and the probability of winning by the direction of armies and their meetings at the place of combat. The demands of strategy grow silent in the face of a tactical victory and adapt themselves to the newly created situation. Strategy is a system of expedients. It is . . . the continued development of the original leading thought in accordance with the constantly changing circumstance.[39]

Moltke concluded that there is no plan that can be guaranteed to survive its first encounter with the enemy's main force.[40]

Therefore, a military leader must rely on commanders' initiative to identify and exploit opportunities in the chaos of battle. For Moltke:

> The tactical result of an engagement forms the base for the strategic decisions . . . because victory or defeat in battle changes the situation to such a degree that no human acumen is able to see beyond the first battle . . . Prearranged designs (schema) collapse and only a proper estimate of the situation shows the commander the correct way. The advantage of the situation will never be fully utilized if the subordinate commander waits for orders. It will be generally more advisable to proceed actively and keep the initiative than to wait to [for] the opponent.[41]

Moltke handled the uncertain nature of the battlefield based on his understanding of command, termed *Auftragstaktik* – command informed by general instructions. This made flexibility possible, at the campaign and strategy levels. Overcoming the loss of control involves not imposing order on chaos through a centralized system, but decentralizing command instead.[42] The principles of initiative and independent decision-making were critical for him, and he would tell his officers that, as officers, they not only had to obey commands,

modern format, which exists to this day in most advanced armies in the world in various versions. He also developed and improved military education and applied a mission-command approach in his own army that encouraged initiative and exploited opportunities at all echelons. Hajo Holborn, "The Prussian-German School: Moltke and the Rise of the General Staff," in Peter Paret (ed.), *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986, pp. 281–295.

[38] Martin Samuels, *Command or Control: Command, Training and Tactics in the British and German Armies, 1888–1918*, London: Frank Cass, 1995, p. 11.

[39] Daniel J. Hughes (edited and translated), *Moltke on the Art of War: Selected Writings*, Novato, CA: Presidio, 1993, p. 47.

[40] Ibid., p. 92.

[41] Hughes, *Moltke on the Art of War*, p. 133.

[42] Van Creveld, *Command in War*, p. 122.

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but also know when not to obey them.[43] For generations, the IDF, too, has adopted this approach to command and military leadership, terming it "mission command."[44] And it was Moshe Dayan as chief of staff who shaped the IDF and his commanders based on this approach.

Clausewitz's and Moltke's insights into the nature of war and the optimal command approach have remained relevant despite all the changes in the past century and a half. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, US General Mark Milley, appointed to his post in 2019, echoed Moltke's words of 150 years earlier:

> Subordinates need to understand that they have the freedom, and they are empowered to disobey a specific order, a specified task, in order to accomplish a purpose. Now, that takes a lot of judgment . . . it can't just be willy-nilly disobedience. This has got to be disciplined disobedience to achieve the higher purpose.[45]

According to Colin Gray, many analysts err in their tendency to view Moltke's valuable approach to strategy as one emphasizing tactics at the expense of strategy.[46] Gray submits that Moltke's understanding of strategy is a response to uncertainty on the battlefield and the corresponding need to allow commanders maximal flexibility, with the uncertainty reflecting an essential truth about the nature of warfare and strategy for Moltke.[47] Events at the tactical level create a constantly changing reality, requiring adjustments from strategists that must match what Moltke terms "the original idea" – the strategic concept that includes the objective and the general principle of action for attaining it.[48] To realize the original strategic idea, the strategist must be attentive to tactical developments that may present unanticipated opportunities that could help realize the strategy. "This is learning through specific events," Gray wrote.[49]

A more traditional view considers strategy to be essentially a one-way process: An idea and plan are generated at the top of the organizational pyramid and trickle down to the most junior levels through plans and instructions. The junior levels' influence is not on strategy formation, but on the execution of the precise instructions each individual receives.

[43] Trevor N. Dupuy, *A Genius for War: The German Army and General Staff, 1807–1945*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1977, p. 116.
[44] See Eitan Shamir, *Pikud mesima* (Hebrew), Ben Shemen: Modan and Maarakhot, 2014, pp. 93–104.
[45] David Barno and Nora Bensahel, "Three Things the Army Chief of Staff Wants You to Know," *War on the Rocks*, May 23, 2017, https://warontherocks.com/2017/05/three-things-the-army-chief-of-staff-wants-you-to-know.
[46] Gray, *The Strategy Bridge*, pp. 124, 248.
[47] Ibid., p. 125.
[48] Ibid., pp. 124–125, 186.
[49] Ibid., p. 125.

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The organizational management researcher Henry Mintzberg is a leading critic of the classical approach to strategy centered on the distinction between planning and execution.[50] He focuses instead on the leader's place and function in the strategic process, which are especially vital for a better understanding of Dayan's decision-making processes. According to Mintzberg, at the center of the strategic process is the solitary leader, equipped with singular mental abilities, wisdom, experience, and insights,[51] and providing a perspective and vision that bridge the present and the future.[52] Because the vision is more a general picture of the future organization than a detailed plan of action, it allows for flexibility, enabling the leader to make adjustments based on changing circumstances. Arguably, this interpretation envisages direction from the top together with room for evolving processes, reflecting a general direction and ideal picture of the future but nonetheless adaptable to changing conditions.[53]

Who is that leader? Mintzberg describes them as an "entrepreneur" – someone who loves independence, has a need to achieve, and tends to take calculated, not undue risks. Unlike the bureaucratic leader's first question when given a task – "What resources will I be given to complete the task?" – the entrepreneur immediately asks, "Where is the opportunity here?" The research describes the entrepreneur-leader as someone highly attentive to the environment and alert for the changes indicating an opportunity that can be exploited to an advantage. In contrast, the bureaucratic manager is mostly engaged with preserving resources and maintaining the status quo. Entrepreneurs, says Mintzberg, quickly transition from identifying an opportunity to taking action to realize it, and their actions tend to be revolutionary.[54] In general, entrepreneurial strategy therefore entails the constant search for new opportunities. Entrepreneurial leaders also tend to have difficulty accepting authority. The entrepreneur-leaders are less concerned with an orderly organizational structure or detailed working plans, instead harnessing the organization's commitment to work in the direction that they have set, according with their motivating vision and theory of underlying factors.[55] Entrepreneurs also take dramatic leaps forward in the face of great uncertainty by making major decisions that entail risk but also offer great opportunity and promise.[56]

Also helpful in understanding Dayan's patterns of leadership is Mintzberg's model of the "strategic learning school," further emphasizing that reality is

[50] Henry Mintzberg, Bruce Ahlsrand, and Joseph Lampel, *Strategy Safari: The Complete Guide through the Wilds of Strategic Management*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1998.
[51] Ibid., p. 124.
[52] Ibid., p. 137.
[53] Ibid., p. 125.
[54] Ibid., p. 133.
[55] Ibid., pp. 135–136.
[56] Ibid., p. 136.

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constantly changing and unpredictable, making prior calculated control and highly detailed strategy impossible. Instead, strategy is the product of a process of learning in which its design and implementation are two interrelated processes. The leader is the main character whose learning is focused and then enables the entire system to learn, resulting in systemic learning. This approach allows for strategic initiatives to arise from all areas of the organization.[57]

Management researchers C. K. Prahalad and Gary Hamel introduced the key concept of "strategic intent" into the literature of management. Unlike a detailed master plan, applying strategic intent helps the organization decide on a clear, consistent, and uniform general, long-term direction that is intuitively accessible to everyone in the organization.[58] The leader's role is to define the strategic intent, provide a clear direction, inspire motivation to explore new areas, and create a sense of shared destiny and mission among all organization members.[59]

Strategy: Between Art and Science

The story goes that, once, a researcher in the field of decision-making was offered important positions by several elite universities after he developed a decision-making model for which he was awarded a very prestigious prize. In response to his difficulty in deciding between them, one colleague suggested, "Why don't you use your model, the one that got you the prize, to help you decide?" The researcher astounded answer: "What?! Are you crazy? This is a serious decision!"

Strategy is more art than science. But, unlike art, it does not exist in an abstract world of ideas; instead, it must translate the abstract and theoretical into an array of actions that affect reality. While multiple decision-making methodologies and methods help statesmen and military leaders analyze their surroundings better, make better decisions, organize the information, and create alternatives and prioritize them, ultimately, they are facing weighty, multivariable decisions involving many considerations, and leaders must decide on their own. According to Mintzberg, strategic decision-makers eventually face "the black box of strategy" about which there are no clear guidelines, and which requires them to use intuition and creativity.[60] The strategist weighs many variables, including probabilities and opportunities, political and economic considerations, and values and ideology, at times considering how

[57] Ibid., p. 208.
[58] Ibid., p. 219.
[59] Summary of Strategic Intent, *Value Based Management*, www.valuebasedmanagement.net/methods_hamel_prahalad_strategic_intent.html.
[60] Henry Mintzberg, "The Fall and Rise of Strategic Planning," *Harvard Business Review*, January–February 1994.

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a decision will affect their legacy. Sometimes these considerations lead to decisions involving great risk, ones that the people around the leader find difficult to understand or justify in the moment; but the leader sees further and deeper and is guided by different considerations that may be hard to grasp in conventional rational terms. Thus, during the War of Independence, Israel's first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, did not hesitate to confront his military commanders. Contravening narrow military logic, he assigned forces to break the siege of Jerusalem and open the road to the city – Operation Nachshon in April 1948, an operation that would prove to be a turning point in the war.[61] Another example is British prime minister Winston Churchill, who, despite the defeat of France and of the British expeditionary force against Germany, and despite Great Britain's isolated and hopeless position in May 1940, and notwithstanding his cabinet's opposition, remained determined not to enter into negotiations with the Germans and to continue to fight relentlessly.[62]

A strategist is born as an artist with a certain talent, a certain tendency to engage in this field. The strategist needs a combination of talent and motivation to reach any sort of leadership position. The Germans called this innate strategic ability *Fingerspitzengefühl*, literally "sensitivity in the fingertips," and the French *coup d'œil* – "a sharp eye," a somewhat ironic term in Dayan's case. The greatest military leaders wrote about having that *coup d'œil*. Frederick the Great (Friedrich II) wrote of it in his book *Military Instructions from the King of Prussia to His Generals*, as did Clausewitz in *On War*. All were agreed that the *coup d'œil* was a gift from God, an innate trait that develops over time.[63] The essence of the *coup d'œil* is the ability to see all the different possibilities at once and decide which is the best. Clausewitz wrote that it was the only way a commander could control events rather than be controlled by them.[64] Various circles all refer to the speed with which understanding is reached, not the result of long, exhausting discussions or of teamwork at headquarters, as is customary today, but rather a swift insight and decision of the solitary leader.

The concept of the *coup d'œil* relates mostly to the tactical battlefield, where events unfold dynamically and swiftly, with relatively clear and visible variables – the ground, the enemy, our forces – in military language, "situation assessment." However, this ability arguably exists at the strategic level as well, Soviet leader Joseph Stalin being an example. Historian Marc Ferro writes:

[61] David Tal, "Milhemet tashah: Milhamto shel Ben-Gurion" (Hebrew), *Iyunim bit'kumat yisrael* 13 (2003), pp. 115–138 (p. 123); Operation Nachshon, p. 124.

[62] Ian Kershaw, *Fateful Choices: Ten Decisions That Changed the World* (in Hebrew translation), Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 2007.

[63] Clausewitz, *On War*, p. 578; B. H. Liddell Hart, *Thoughts on War*, London: Faber & Faber, 1944.

[64] Clausewitz, *On War*, p. 578.

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> In August 1942, when Churchill informed Stalin of Operation Torch, the Allied invasion of French North Africa, he was stunned by the acuity of his interlocutor's strategic understanding. Stalin instantaneously realized the strategic advantages of Operation Torch and proceeded to enumerate the four major reasons to embark on it: attacking Rommel from the rear, ending the dependence on Spain, sparking a conflict between the French and Germans in France, and placing Italy in the line of fire.[65]

Ferro quoted Churchill's diary about Stalin: "I was most impressed by this precise analysis . . . Few people would have been able to follow, within minutes, the considerations to which we had given long and hard thought. He understood it all in the blink of an eye."[66] Stalin, who never received any formal military education or academic education in policy or strategy, was, according to Churchill's testimony, gifted with an almost instinctual grasp of these fields, which is not at all self-evident.

In recent decades, there have been comprehensive studies on the phenomenon of the instant or intuitive decision. These studies have, to an extent, lifted the fog about the mechanism of an ability considered to be innate rather than acquired. Still, what we do not know far exceeds what we do know. Malcolm Gladwell, in his popular book *Blink: The Power of Thinking without Thinking*, summarizes the scientific studies of the phenomenon. The scientific concept he uses is "adaptive unconscious," which he describes as an enormous computer quickly processing a great deal of the information one needs to function.[67] The brain does something that scientists call "thin slicing" because it identifies patterns in different situations and behaviors on the basis of very thin slices of experience.[68] This does not mean that this type of decision is free of errors of bias or judgment, but it does indicate that some people, in addition to their talent, have undergone certain kinds of experience and have become accustomed to training their minds in certain contexts, eventually becoming able to immediately identify a problem and suggest an alternative mode of action. Sometimes they find it difficult to explain, even in hindsight, how the answer leapt to their mind and why they were so certain they were right. They just knew and called it intuition.

In face of the chaotic nature of the strategic process, the strategist requires a high degree of sophistication and an inner sense or confidence leading them to try possible feasible actions, and, better yet, encourage others to do the same. Furthermore, the strategist must know something good when they see it.[69]

[65] Marc Ferro, *Ils étaient sept hommes en guerre: 1918–1945: histoire parallèle*, Paris: Robert Laffont, 2007, p. 266 (in Hebrew translation, *Shiva'a Gvarim Be'milchama: Kinneret-Zmora-Bitan*, Or Yehuda: Dvir, 2010).

[66] Ferro, *Ils étaient sept hommes en guerre*, p. 266.

[67] Malcolm Gladwell, *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking* (in Hebrew translation), Keter, Jerusalem, 2005, p. 13.

[68] Ibid., p. 21.

[69] Mintzberg et al., *Strategy Safari*, pp. 194–195.

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"Only a Mule Never Changes Its Mind"

Dayan was known for changing his mind on various issues with some regularity. Some viewed this trait as inconsistency and criticized him for it, insisting that leaders should subscribe to a single big idea. Dayan's response to this was another of his famous quips: "Only a mule never changes its mind." As already noted by Michael Oren, Dayan's could hold more than just two contradictory positions simultaneously, and Dayan could shift from strenuous objection to unconditional support of a fateful decision in literally a matter of hours.[70] Dayan's ability to decide one way, and then change his decision – sometimes by 180 degrees – is important to understanding the unique way in which he developed and operated as a strategist.

Historian and philosopher Isaiah Berlin famously distinguished between hedgehogs and foxes. Hedgehogs are in-depth experts on a certain topic and their vision is narrow, whereas foxes dabble in many topics but take a broad view. According to the Greek proverb on which Berlin based his thoughts, "The fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing." Historian John Gaddis claims that the successful strategist must be part-hedgehog and part-fox, citing F. Scott Fitzgerald who wrote that: "The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposing ideas in mind at the same time and still be able to act." The strategist, says Gaddis, must be capable of having a clear direction, like the hedgehog, and sensitivity to a changing environment, like the fox.[71]

Dayan was an autodidact. Like most Israeli leaders, he felt that his military career was the result of necessity rather than choice. His study of war was driven not by from any professional interest or intellectual passion to understand war as a phenomenon, but from the practical need to solve concrete political problems by military means. He never felt he had to apologize for this direction, even describing wars as "the most exciting events in life."[72]

Dayan's intellectual abilities were manifested mainly in the spheres of strategy and statesmanship. His curiosity about people and places, his ability to change his mind, his critical thinking, his vivid imagination, and the fact that he never took anything for granted were all important components of his success. And, most importantly, his views on strategic matters never stopped developing. These traits led him to travel to Vietnam, where he was able to study a different type of war and develop a perspective on fighting different from what he had known in the Middle East. Dayan did not necessarily like to study in the rigid, sterile setting of the classroom, but it would be a mistake to think that Dayan was opposed to learning or the accumulation of knowledge.

[70] Oren, *Six Days of War*.
[71] John Lewis Gaddis, *On Grand Strategy*, New York: Allen Lane, 2018, pp. 19–20.
[72] In a 1972 interview Dayan gave to British journalist Llew Gardner. www.youtube.com/watch?v=FzVrRStVo9k.

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He did detest learning in bureaucratic settings, seeing himself first and foremost as a man of action and experience.

Dayan's natural curiosity developed and shaped his strategic learning and new ideas. He therefore learned from every situation and experience. This resulted in a never-ending cycle of experiences from which he could articulate a frame of reference for understanding a new situation and finding solutions and ideas that, at that stage, represented an experiment aimed at testing the waters.

Thus, the central claim of this book is that Dayan's manner of learning and decision-making was dependent on the particular circumstances of every event. Nonetheless, over the years, Dayan's strategic approach evolved and matured. Dayan, who began his career as a junior tactical commander, became a military leader as well as a statesman whose major undertaking was in the realm of grand strategy.

About a decade has passed since the last biography of Moshe Dayan was published.[73] In this decade, various archives have made public many documents related to the decades in which Dayan was active.[74] These documents have made possible several in-depth studies of various periods, from the establishment of the state until the end of the 1970s.[75] The IDF's history department has published a host of studies on the IDF and the wars it fought during the period in which Dayan was chief of staff and defense minister, penned by its scholars and based on archival sources of the IDF that had mostly been closed to university researchers.[76] The book made use of these

[73] Mordechai Bar-On, *Moshe Dayan: Koron hayav 1915–1981*, Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 2014. The book was previously published in English in July 2012 as *Moshe Dayan: Israel's Controversial Hero* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press), so the book is based on information that was available until that year.

[74] Especially the State Archive, which released many documents related to cabinet meetings between the Six-Day War and the Yom Kippur War.

[75] Some prominent examples: Yoav Gelber, *Haz'man hapalestini: Israel, yarden, vehapalestinim 1967–1970* (Hebrew), Hevel Modiin: Dvir, 2018; Yoav Gelber, *Hatasha: Hamilhama shenish'kek'ha* (Hebrew), Kinneret Zmora: Bitan, 2017; Boris Dolin, *Homat Suez Sipura shel hamilhama hasodit bein medinat yisrael livrit hamo'atzot* (Hebrew), Kinneret Zmora: Hevel Modiin, 2020; Amos Gilboa, *Mar modiin: Ahareleh, aluf Aharon Yariv, rosh aman*, Rishon Letsion: Miskal Publishing, 2013; Mordechai Bar-On, *K'shehatsava hehelif madav: Prakim behitpat'hut tsahal bashanim harishonot le'ahar milhemet ha'atsmaut 1949–1953* (Hebrew), Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 2017; Yagil Henkin, *The 1956 Suez War and the New World Order in the Middle East: Exodus in Reverse*, Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015; Meir Boymfeld, *Kfitsa lamayim hakarim: Hamaga'im hamedini'im bein yisrael, mitstayim, ve'artsot habrit bashanim shekadmou lemilhemet yom hakippurim 1970–1973* (Hebrew), Reut: Effi Meltser, 2017; Israel Tal and Yair Tal, *Prakim lemilhemet yom hakippurim* (Hebrew), Rishon Letsion: Miskal Publishing (Yedioth Ahronoth and Hemed Books), 2019; Herzl Shapir, *Milhemet yom hakippurim: Mabat shoneh* (Hebrew), Ben Shemen: Modan and Maarakhot, 2020.

[76] In these publications, the series of book by Shimon Golan about decision-making in the uppermost command echelon stands out: Shimon Golan, *Hamilhama lehafsakat hahatasha: Kabalat hahahlatot barama haestrategit bemilhemet hahatasha bahazit hamitsrit*

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publications to arrive at a more comprehensive and accurate historical assessment. But historical facts are one thing and interpretation another. Dayan is at the center of many debates and controversies among historians, and this book attempts to present to the reader both the debates about the various events and the author's own reading of them.

Structured chronologically, the chapters present the arc of Dayan's development as a strategist during a long career, focusing on security and geopolitical topics. The concluding chapter analyzes Dayan as a leader and strategist, examining both his strengths and his weaknesses.

(Hebrew), Ben Shemen: Modan and Maarakhot, 2018; Shimon Golan, *Milhama beyom hakippurim: Kabalat hahahlatot bapikud haelyon bemilhamat yom hakippurim* (Hebrew), Ben Shemen: Maarakhot and Modan, 2013; Shimon Golan, *Hafradat kohot betsel hahatasha: Kabalat hahahlatot badereg haestrategi bamasa umatann al heskemey hafradat hakohot aharey milhemet yom hakippurim* (Hebrew), Ben Shemen: Maarakhot and Modan, 2019; as well as other scholars in the history department: Zeev Elron, *Likrat hasivuv hasheni: Hat'murot betsahal vehashinuy shelo haya bitfisat habitahon 1952–1955* (Hebrew), Ben Shemen: Maarakhot and Modan, 2016; Eli Michelson, "Tahalikh halemida shel tsahal mimilhemet Sinai, November 1956–May 1957" (Hebrew), PhD dissertation, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, January 2019.

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