

WEEKEND

The Twilight Zone Gideon Levy and Alex Levac

Umar Snobar is brought into the room so he can be shown off, held in the arms of his Aunt Iman, his father's sister. Umar is wrapped in a light blue wool blanket. His little head turns from side to side, his face is sallow, his hands are miniatures.

He's 2 weeks old. A tense silence falls in the room at the sight of the newborn. Only his grandmother breaks into quiet sobs, "Haram ["pity" in Arabic] on the baby," she whispers through her tears. The other family members stop themselves from responding like her.

But no one in the room is left indifferent at the sight of the infant. No one can remain indifferent, not choke up, when there's a 2-week-old orphan.

This baby was born into orphanhood. Two days after his birth, an Israeli soldier shot and killed his father, who was unarmed and was nowhere near the soldier, during a demonstration next to his village. Tareq Snobar lived only 27 years and was a father for just 48 hours. He saw his firstborn son at his birth but never got to bring him home, as he had planned to do on the day of his death.

The village of Yatma is east of Tapuah Junction in the center of the West Bank. We were there last November with Abdulkarim Sadi, a field researcher for the Israeli human rights group B'Tselem who accompanied us again this time. Back then we were looking into the circumstances of the death of 17-year-old Amer Snobar, a relative of Tareq who according to witnesses was beaten to death by Israeli troops. This week, waiting in the living room of Tareq Snobar's home in Yatma were his immediate family, all very subdued, though the father, 64-year-old Umar, who for most of his life worked in construction in Israel, gave us a smile. Tareq's mother, Hanna, 54, a dialysis patient, was enveloped by her mourning, mute in black. His brother, Mohammed, 28, and his sister,



Hanna Snobar, Tareq's mother, holding her newborn grandson, Umar. Tareq's sister Iman is sitting next to them.

A father for 48 hours

Tareq Snobar was on his way to the hospital to bring his wife and newborn son home. The road from his village, however, was blocked by Israeli soldiers because of a demonstration against both the Gaza military operation and a new settler outpost. A soldier took aim from afar and killed the new father

Iman, 33, were there, too, along with Hamada Snobar, 31, who was with his cousin Tareq when a soldier kneeled, aimed his rifle and from long range fired one deadly round, apparently with the intent to kill. The soldier certainly didn't know that Tareq had just become a father for the first time and was thrilled to be on his way to the Anglican Hospital in Nablus to bring his son home. The baby's mother, Rand Naanish, 22, from Nablus, was closeted

in her room.

It was Friday, May 14, what became a black Friday in the West Bank, though no one in Israel is aware of it. On that day Israeli soldiers killed no fewer than 12 Palestinians in the West Bank, the most on a single day since 2002, under cover of the war raging in the Gaza Strip. Tareq Snobar was one of them. Two years ago, he and his brother Mohammed opened a restaurant in Yatma after previously owning

a restaurant in Hawara, north of their village. Tareq spent four years in an Israeli prison after being arrested at age 17 for throwing stones and taking part in disturbances. He was released in 2015 and two years ago married Ranad; the couple lived in the family home in Yatma.

On May 14, Tareq returned home from the restaurant at around 2 P.M. It was a holiday, Eid al-Fitr, marking the end of Ramadan fasting, and Tareq

wanted very much to bring his wife and son home and present Umar to the family and their neighbors. His plan was to go that afternoon to the hospital where his son was born two days earlier; no one imagined that a few hours later he himself would lay dying in another Nablus hospital. At the entrance to the village a demonstration was underway of people from Yatma and nearby to protest the war and killing in Gaza, and to protest the establishment of the

"unauthorized" settler outpost of Eviatar on land belonging to Yatma and two other villages, Qabalan and Beita.

In the past few weeks, about 20 structures have been put up, supposedly in secret, at Eviatar, to the east of the village. The outpost was established about a month ago in the olive groves of Jebel Sabih, in response to a stabbing attack at Tapuah Junction, and the veteran settler activist Daniela Weiss, eyes glistening, declared its creation on television. This week we saw the new outpost, which lies along the road that descends to the Jordan Valley. A huge bulldozer of the Israel Defense Forces was in the center of the unauthorized outpost, with a group of settlers gathered around it.

When Tareq learned that the road from the village was blocked, he drove toward the demonstration; with him were Hamada and a few friends. Children and teenagers threw stones at the soldiers, who fired tear gas, stun grenades and rubber-tipped metal bullets at the demonstrators – a familiar Friday ritual in the West Bank. According to Hamada, the soldiers and the demonstrators were about a hundred meters apart, and the stones didn't hit anyone. Hamada says Tareq was frustrated at not being able to drive to Nablus and may even have been furious, but adds that the two of them didn't take part in the stone-throwing and simply watched from afar. Then they went home for lunch and afterward drove back to the demonstration. Tareq's father begged him not to go, but Tareq was adamant.

At 4 P.M. the soldiers stepped up the frequency of the gunfire, maybe to end the demonstration; then they switched to live fire. Hamada says another unit of soldiers or special-ops police arrived in a white van and took position. The demonstration didn't abate. At that point, only two people had been wounded, by rubber-tipped bullets.

At 7:40 P.M., Tareq and Hamada were still standing there, still unable to leave the village. Suddenly Hamada spotted a soldier kneeling down and aiming his rifle at them. The soldier was about a hundred meters away, Hamada says. "He's aiming at us!" he shouted to Tareq, but too late. One lethal bullet slammed into Tareq's left hip.

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The best-laid plans

Contrary to the claim that Israel suddenly found itself holding territories after the June '67 war, declassified documents reveal detailed directives drawn up by the IDF ahead of the prolonged policing mission it would be tasked with



Arab prisoners of war being led blindfolded to interrogation in the Old City of Jerusalem, June 8, 1967. Goren/AP

Adam Raz

For years, most Israeli historiography maintained that the country's decision makers were taken by surprise by the fruits of the victory that were harvested with lightning speed in June 1967. "The war," Defense Minister Moshe Dayan said, three days after its conclusion, "developed and rolled into fronts that were not intended and were not preplanned by anyone, including by me." On the basis of these and other statements, the view took root that the conquest of the territories in the war was the result of a rapid slide down a slippery slope, a new reality that no one wanted.

However, historical documentation stored in the Israel State Archives and the Israel Defense Forces and Defense Establishment Archives in recent years demands that we cast doubt on the credence of that view. The information cited here constitutes just a small part of a wide range of documentation being held in governmental archives relating to the conquest of the territories, and which remain classified. Long-term stubborn persistence was necessary to effect the declassification of some of the documents on which this article is based.

The documents describe detailed

preparations that were made in the military in the years before 1967, with the intention of organizing in advance the control of territories that the defense establishment assessed – with high certainty – would be conquered in the next war. A perusal of the information indicates that the takeover and retention of these areas – the West Bank from Jordan, the Sinai Peninsula and Gaza Strip from Egypt, and the Golan Heights from Syria – were not a by-product of the fighting, but the manifestation of a strategic approach and prior preparations.

The IDF's meticulous preparations to conquer the territories had already begun early in the 1960s. They were, in part, the product of the short and bitter Israeli experience in the conquest – and subsequent evacuation – of the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip in the Sinai War of 1956. It's against this background that we should understand the document titled "Proposal to Organize the Military Government," written by the head of operations, Col. Elad Peled, in June 1961, and presented to Chief of Staff Tzvi Tzur. Six years before the Six-Day War, the proposal consisted of detailed, initial planning for the forces that would be needed to rule in what would become the occupied territories.

Two years later, in August 1963, the IDF's General Staff Branch (afterward

the Operations Branch), which was then headed by Yitzhak Rabin, drew up a widely circulated directive regarding the organization of the military government in the territories. This order sheds light, in its words, on Israel's "expected directions of expansion," which in the assessment of the security personnel would be the focus of the next war. These territories included the West Bank, Sinai, the Syrian heights and Damascus, and southern Lebanon up to the Litani River.

The August 1963 order was prepared following an evaluation two months earlier by the military government unit that controlled the lives of Arabs within Israel. In internal correspondence, it suggested that the future organization of rule in the territories had been executed "hastily" to date and "does not completely meet all the needs."

Called the "Organization Order – Military Government in State of Emergency," it stated that, "The IDF's thrust to transfer the war to the enemy's territories will necessarily bring about expansion [into] and conquest of areas beyond the state's borders." Based on the Israeli experience in the period following the Sinai campaign, the document stated that it would be necessary to install a military government quickly, because "these conquests might last for a short time only and we will have to evacuate the territories following international pressure or an arrangement." The part that followed, however, was meant for those who would be tasked with administering the military government in the future occupied area, and it hints at the intention of the order's authors: "However, a convenient political situation might develop which will make it possible to retain occupied territory indefinitely."

Indeed, the exploitation of that "convenient situation" necessitated the meticulous organization of the modes of military rule in the occupied territories. Accordingly, the IDF devoted attention to training and preparing the units and administrative bodies that would rule the Palestinian population. They bore broad responsibility: from legal issues attendant on the occupation of territories, to intelligence gathering about the population and the infrastructures in the West Bank.

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with the infant, known as “sleep training.”

“I approach this with humility, because I didn’t breast-feed, obviously. Still, I co-slept with my son. I am aware of the difficulties that are piled on the shoulders of parents in a dynamic world that creates stressful situations. But I’m not sure that the changes of the dynamic, modern world should be loaded onto the narrow shoulders of the infant. I only tried one time to ‘train’ my son to sleep, when I put him in the crib and let him cry. I snapped after about 10 minutes, took him in my arms and vowed: Never again. To this day – and he’s 42 – I feel guilty about it. I know that what I have to say will not be pleasant to the ear, but in my view, the practice of sleep training is absolutely child abuse. It’s a practice that’s based on a totally mistaken myth to the effect that infants have ‘a problem’ and that uninterrupted sleep is ‘good’ for them. Let’s be precise: It may make things easier for parents, and that’s understandable in our demanding world, but it is definitely not what babies need.”

Nevertheless, the physical and mental exhaustion parents experience is making sleep training increasingly popular. Advocates of this form of behavioral intervention maintain that being able to fall asleep independently is an important skill that parents can impart to infants and that it can assist in cognitive development and in improving the functioning of the immune system. In addition, they argue, continuous sleep also has an influence on emotional and social development.

As a lactation consultant who in the course of my work with mothers in Israel deals with issues relating to the sleep of breastfeeding infants, I have read a number of the studies on which these arguments are based. Some of the research deals with the importance of high-quality sleep in general, without specific reference to infants, whose sleep patterns are decidedly different. Other studies refer to sleep difficulties in toddlers and children, but not in infants. Some of the research lacks clear, objective criteria for defining such terms such as sleep “problems” or “difficulties.” I have not seen any study that concludes that sleep training is actually beneficial to babies. I did read studies maintaining that such training is not detrimental to an infant, in either the short or long run. The question is whether “not detrimental” is a sufficient conclusion when it comes to an attempt to change our children’s behavior.

Many parents relate that sleep training absolutely saved them. Do you think that behavioral intervention in a baby’s sleep is never good?

“All I can do is accept the fact that in certain circumstances there are parents who will insist on that kind of training in order to optimize their rest. But it’s important that they not deceive themselves into thinking that it’s being done for the good of the infant or the toddler. No matter how we look at it, from the child’s perspective, sleep training is a cruel and unusual punishment even at later ages, which has to do with processes such as weaning and basing nutrition on solid foods, and not with ‘regularizing’ the child’s sleep.”

Your study deals for the most part with an age in which the human infant is completely helpless. Until what age do you advocate co-sleeping with children?

“There is no biological boundary that states that a child should not or does not want to co-sleep with its parents in order to feel safe and protected, as long as it’s appropriate for everyone. In the case of toddlers and children, it’s no longer a purely biological thing, it’s social. The social circumstances, which are a by-product of Western society, are what transform



James McKenna. “We are not kind enough to our infants,” he sighs.

co-sleeping at this stage in the child’s life into a less successful experience for the adults, and that is perfectly fine.”

Continued tradition

“We are not kind enough to our infants,” McKenna sighs toward the end of our conversation. In large measure, he has devoted more than 40 years of research to helping introduce something of that goodness into our behavior with our offspring – a process that perhaps will also make us beneficent toward ourselves. If we only internalize that we are not a potential harm to our children, that there is no need to invest in “correcting” them – that it’s enough to maintain close contact.

In the end, he can look back with satisfaction. The conclusions of his research are trickling down ever more into the heart of the medical establishment, he is a lecturer much in demand and is courted by scientific journals, as well as holding a professorship at Santa Clara University, in California. In keeping with the principle of practicing what he preaches, McKenna is also applying his ideas about the importance of physical closeness to his toddler grandson who lives nearby, and enjoys seeing that his son is also continuing the tradition of close contact with his son.

“That,” he sums up, “is the greatest satisfaction.”

Einat Talmon is a lactation consultant (IBCLC).

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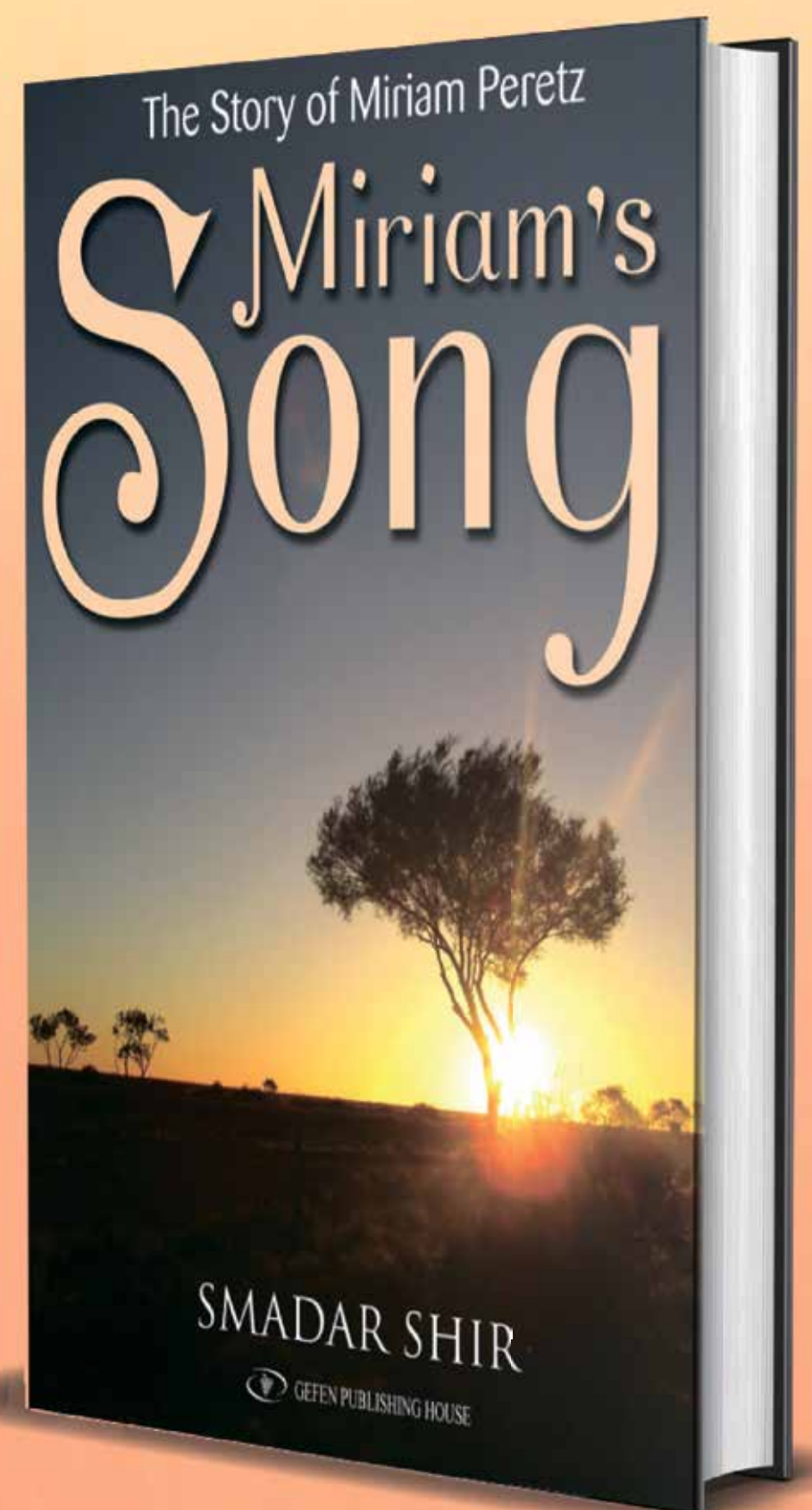
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BEST-LAID PLANS

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Whereas no one within the defense establishment disputed the IDF’s superior power and its ability to conquer swiftly the territories from Egypt, Jordan and Syria – before 1967, officers in the military government that existed inside Israel were apprehensive about the preparation of the units that would rule in the territories. Along with the military doctrine that called for the fighting to be moved into enemy territory, a doctrine existed concerning rule of civilians, based on the recognition that following such a takeover, Israel would control an occupied civilian population, whose administration would necessitate the establishment of a military government bureaucracy.

Col. Yehoshua Verbin, in his capacity as commander of the military government inside Israel until 1966, with extensive experience in operating the mechanisms of supervision and control over Israel’s Palestinians, played a central role in preparations for executing the order to establish a military government in the conquered territories. In a moment of frankness, in December 1958, he admitted to a ministerial committee that had convened to discuss the future of the military government within Israel, “I haven’t even decided for myself whether we are doing them more harm or good.” However, as a senior commanding officer, in June 1965, he warned his superior, Haim Bar-Lev, that the command structures of the administration for ruling occupied territories were insufficiently qualified to carry out their future mission. “Very little progress has been made on this subject.” He added, “It appears that the commands of the administration in occupied territories will not be suited to fulfill their tasks.” This was two years before the war.

Involving officers of the military government that had been imposed on Israel’s Palestinian citizens since 1948 in the planning was logical, because the organizational and military framework that operated vis a vis that community constituted the basis for rule in the territories that would be conquered in a war. In 1963, the units of the military government already had 15 years of experience in imposing “order” and supervision over those Palestinian citizens, by means of a strict regime of permits. From a military perspective, it made sense for this body to serve as the model for the structure of rule in the territories that would be conquered in the next war.

However, after the 1967 war, Defense Minister Dayan rejected the proposal of Shin Bet security service chief Yosef Harmelin to replicate the forms of control of the military government in Israel in the territories (a stance that for years was cited to demonstrate Dayan’s supposed enlightened view). However, even though Dayan generally refrained from appointing former military governors from within Israel as governors across the Green Line, the normalization of the “enlightened occupation” bore a character similar to that of the military government that had existed within Israel. Accordingly, the vaguer the temporariness of the occupation became, the cruder and more violent it became.

To illustrate the direct line that connected the military government that existed within Israel (until December 1966) to that operating in the territories after the June 1967 war, it’s sufficient to look at the metamorphosis its official branches underwent. In the months following the war, the unit that had operated the military government in Israel was rebranded as the “department of military administration and territorial security.” Today it’s known by a different, catchier name: “Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories.”

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