

Dr. Yom Tov Samia

Leadership In Moments of Truth

**Leading, Managing and Commanding –
During Routine and Trying Moments
in the Eye of the Storm**

Yom Tov Samia

Leadership in Moments of Truth

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Leadership

In Moments of Truth

Transforming One2Team
&
The Challenges of Leadership,
Management and Military Command
based on personal experience and long-term
Interdisciplinary and Multidisciplinary Empirical study
of Leaders, Managers and Commanders

To my mother and father, my roots,
To the brother who is missing and the brother who is
present but silent, and
To my children and Grandson, light of my eyes and joy of my life.

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Foreword by Four- Star General (retired) Wesley Clark¹

No modern nation has relied more on its armed forces than the state of Israel. From its war for independence in 1948 through its current struggles against terrorists, the history of Israeli Defense Forces and Israel are totally intertwined. Israel has depended on the Israel Defense Forces for its existence, for its security, for social integration of its diverse and growing population, as a source of cultural inspiration, economic achievements, and political leadership. Major General Yom Tov Samia's book on leadership, based on solid scholarly work and replete with personal examples and testimonials, provides a compelling and insightful reflection on all these elements of Israel. His lessons are significant not only for his Israeli readers, but also for a much broader audience: for all those interested in the evolution of modern armed forces, the changing nature of warfare, the evolution of military institutions, and of course, for its reflections on the nature of leadership under prolonged stress.

¹ General (retired) Wesley Clark served in the US armed forces between 1966 and 2000. In his last posting he served as SACEUR - Supreme Allied Commander Europe (NATO 1997-2000). A highly decorated officer, General Clark also served as USSOUTHCOM, fought in Vietnam, Kosovo and numerous operations. In 2004, General Clark joined the Democratic Party and was among the presidential candidates in the primaries. Now a businessman, General Clark is involved, inter alia, in renewable energy projects. General Clark is the author of four books on leadership and combat. The acquaintance between General Clark and Major General Samia began when they first met to discuss renewable energy issues, and the need of both the US and the Israel to strive for energy self-sufficiency as an integral part of national security.

Yom Tov's biography reflects the journey of Israel, from scattered communities of largely East European, socialist-minded settlers, imbued with the Zionist spirit to seek their ancestral homeland, to a culturally diverse, modern industrial and military power, coursing with democratic vitality, and struggling with the social, cultural, economic, and security issues symptomatic of modern states; in some respects, even, Israel's story provides a foretaste of the security issues that many Western countries are now grappling with. Yom Tov is one of eleven children, from a Sephardic Jewish family that immigrated into Israel from Libya in the 1950s. He joined the IDF as a soldier in 1972, rising throughout the ranks ultimately to Major General and command of the Southern region of the IDF, with responsibilities for Gaza Strip, the border with Egyptian Sinai, and part of the border with Jordan. After retiring in 2000, he worked in the private sector, leading large companies, and subsequently becoming an entrepreneur even while he continued duties as a reserve officer with the IDF, through the most recent operations in 2014.

His leadership lessons are broad and varied - ranging from training and integration of new recruits, to the management of civilian-military relations and their impact on the armed forces. Along the way, Yom Tov takes us deep inside many of the most fascinating and, for the Western World, least understood aspect of Israel's and the IDF's journey, and into the modern problem of conflict and security operations among a civilian population. Certain aspects of Yom Tov's memoir bear the closest study: his emphasis on military culture, for example, and how it is to be created and preserved. Here he deals with the IDF's role as the cultural foundation for modern Israel, and the need to create a meritocratic institution recognizing and rewarding effectiveness, from a polyglot and socially diverse mixture of draftees. Another key aspect of Yom Tov's leadership deals with the challenge of organizational creativity: how to achieve discipline and high standards, while encouraging team members to be thoughtful, creative and moral as well as physically courageous. Yom Tov sets a

good example himself, in this respect, as he takes the reader through meticulous preparations and insightful learning in preparation for key operations when he was a battalion and brigade commander. This is a man who has led from the front, and shared deeply in the risks of the soldiers he led. Additionally, his insights and experiences of operations in and around Gaza are particularly noteworthy for their focus on separating the enemy combatants from a civilian populace ranging from apathetic to openly hostile. These are lessons which Western armies must learn and relearn as they face the current challenges in the Mideast, and as they assist their own security forces at home.

It has been my privilege to visit Israel on a professional basis many times, both in uniform and as a businessman. I've met many of the renowned IDF leaders mentioned in the book, from Yitzhak Rabin to Ehud Barak, Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, Shaul Mofaz, and Gabi Ashkenazi. Some I've known well enough to consider good friends. I cannot judge the details of Yom Tov's recollections of them, or his assessments of their actions and impact. But the impact of the political upon the military sphere of endeavor, along with rivalries and clashes of ambitions, are always at the heart of the military profession, and Yom Tov's insight and experiences provide rich tableaux for learning.

Military operations must always be directed to some political purpose, and they must be governed by the rules and guidelines to attain that purpose, whatever the underlying dynamic of conflict might be. Tamerlane may have effectively completed his conquests by scourging cities and erecting piles of skulls in testimony, but modern armies cannot and must not. International law, opinion, and democratic governance provide their own sets of restraints. The overwhelming effectiveness of the IDF, its rapid adaptation to changing conditions of combat, quick adaptation of new technologies like unmanned aerial vehicles and heavily armored personnel carriers, and its extraordinary sensitivity to its own casualties have provided for Western nations and their armies a foretaste of the challenges to

come. Much as some leaders strive to imbue the “warrior spirit” in their soldiers, the fierce and escalating violence which is warfare’s own dynamic must be tempered by respect and by the political aims which drive the operation. And it is in the interchange of political aims and restraints with the so-called “principles of war” that all of us who have grown up in the profession of arms have struggled with. Getting this right is both a matter of personalities and also a matter of prolonged education and reflection.

But, at the heart of the military-political interface, and top leadership, there is the matter of personalities. We all have them, and the higher our rank, the more exposed they are. Military men live for their achievements and their reputations - not for their paychecks and bonuses. Leaders are competitive, and none more so than the most successful. How to manage the competitive spirit, and how to protect the troops and mission performance from rivalries and ambitions are timeless problems for military leaders, and the civilians who direct them and judge them. Hence there is much to be learned from Yom Tov’s candid descriptions of his own experiences in this realm.

Yom Tov’s leadership lessons reflect the themes that have marked the greatest successes of the IDF - innovative leadership from the front, careful preparation, risk taking, and courage. He has had a remarkable career, marked by courage, innovation, and thoughtful, highly principled leadership. It’s a record which he should be proud of, and with this translation from the Hebrew into English, the lessons he draws from his lifetime of experience are now available to the broader audience who seek them.

General (Ret.) Wesley Clark - 2016

Publisher's Note

This book was written for a general audience. It is meant to be of interest for anyone intrigued by the challenges of leadership and includes both a practical and theoretical standpoint. It can also serve as a textbook for managers in all realms and military leadership on all levels – as well as in organizations and institutions of education. This book hopes to make a hearty contribution to the better good.

Leadership in Moments of Truth is divided into two sections and five parts. The first two parts are based, almost in entirety, on the author's doctorate, completed in the year 2000. The material in four of the chapters was gleaned from practical experiences.

After reading the Introduction, Rivers, Streams & the Flow of My Life, in Section A, the reader will be able to taste both aspects of Yom Tov Samia's work. It can be read from beginning to end or chapter by chapter – moving between the practical aspects; the events and dilemmas and Section B, which includes diagrams, graphs and theoretical models.

General (retired) Wesley Clark provided the introduction to this book and his words are crystal clear in their praise as well as their accuracy when he states that this book provides valuable “lessons (that are) significant not only for his Israeli readers, but also for a much broader audience: for all those interested in the evolution of modern armed forces, the changing nature of warfare, the evolution of military institutions, and of course, for its reflections on the nature of leadership under prolonged stress.”

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Author's Note

“A book once written has no master.”²

Indeed, if books can be said to have masters, then this is only regarding the bound book itself.

This book been written primarily from my own perspective and it enables each reader to examine the content from his or her own perspective.

Leadership is based upon decisions and the ability to motivate those under his leadership. Often, Leadership is discovered during moments of truth in the field or in the office. It is not always a garden of roses at the top, and it can be blazing with loneliness. The enormous gap between the weight of responsibility and heroism – more so than the ability of one person - At the cruel loneliness at the top. But there, like an upside down pyramid, with the base at the op, sit the goals and strength of that one person, and it is expected that he, alone, will pull the coach to the finish line. This is only one of the opposing factors that come with the role of leader, which is full of contradictions and absurdities. The objective of this book is – to reverse the pyramid – in order to make leadership an easier task. One of the most important tools the leader has is his ability to learn from his experiences and from others': the mistakes and successes, as well as accept advice from his advisors. They are not a replacement for his leadership, only he can make the final decisions, but he must listen carefully. When Odysseys took sail, he left his son in the care of his good friend and mentor – the source of

² Rabbi Yitzhak Saggi Nahor, also known as Isaac the Blind: a great Kabbalah sage (C 1160-1235, Provence, France).

the word: and their relationship is described in dramatic detail and how the mentor led his son astray. This book can also be a guiding light for leaders, as they weigh their entrance into the exhausting loneliness as leader, during preparation for the role in all its steps, and mostly within the decision making process within the real dilemmas of management and military leadership.

The practical section of this book is a continuation to my book *One2Team* (2008, in Hebrew), which deals with the establishment of any framework, its management, and its subsequent running during routine times as well as at moments of truth. By “framework” I mean any organization with a focus the better good of individuals and society as a whole. The examples of which have a wide spectrum: military units, commercial organizations seeking to make a profit, government units and those with a public interest or non-profit organizations. These three are the most important:

A: Organizations with a focus on helping individuals or individuals and society.

B: At the origin of the organization is the **base group** which sets the tone and the role of the organization.

C: In every organization, there must be a **leader** who decides the goals and missions, and will advance the organization towards its goals.

I will analyze these three common denominators using three different scalpels: multi-disciplinary empirical research, personal experience, and the experience of others.

The book has six major objectives:

- ❑ To closely examine the elements and characteristics of the organizational climate of the Basic Group and their impact on achieving the organization's goals.
- ❑ To identify the internal and external factors in the framework of the Basic Group and their impact on motivation and on