

Acknowledgement

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DECISION TO KILL:

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Introduction

For the past fifteen years I have been a volunteer with the Israeli Prison Services. I teach prisoners, attempt to recruit more volunteers, and try to assist prisoners in their rehabilitation process, both inside and out of prison.

I earn my living as a professor of Quantitative Methods of Management in the Economics and Management Department of the Ruppin Institute. My main subject is decision-making. This book is a result of these two areas of interest.

The idea to write a book about the decision to kill first occurred to me during one of my weekly visits with a life-convict in the open wing of the Tel-Mond Prison. We were discussing politics and other lofty subjects, when I suddenly asked him: "Do you think that it could have been the other way around, with you the volunteer going home after this visit, and me a convicted murderer serving a life-sentence?" He didn't hesitate. "Sure. You have no idea how fast and sudden the transition is from being a normal respectable citizen from a spacious, warm home to becoming someone accused of murder, having to live years in a smelly, crowded cell in the detention center."

Following this conversation, which took place while I was editing my first book (*The Moshav Reservation*, 1990, which dealt with the various aspects of the Israeli Moshav), I decided to interview people who had committed murders or participated in them, and to try and follow, as much as possible, the decision-making processes which led to murder.

For this purpose, I met with about one hundred men and women who were accused of murder or manslaughter. Not all of them had confessed, and many agreed only to informal discussions to supply me with background material, but refused to be interviewed officially. Of this group, I interviewed about fifty people, twenty-one of whom are represented by the stories in this book. The interviews were chosen mainly according to their suitability to the various theories of decision-making and to the degree of interest in the story itself.

This is not a representative statistical sample. I only interviewed those who confessed, in court or in prison, and agreed to be interviewed. There was no pressure, and nothing was promised in exchange for an interview.

My intention in writing this book was to try to understand the motives and decision-making processes which led to murder. The identifying details of the victims and the perpetrators, as far as these were irrelevant to the process, were altered in order to retain the anonymity of the interviewees.

All murder and manslaughter cases in the book, except the last chapter, are described in the first person. In fact, the stories all began as question and answer interviews, but the questions were omitted and the answers were edited as a consecutive story. I used material written by the interviewees in two cases, although it was written for different purposes. I did not read trial transcripts or the verdict of any of the cases.

This book is not a criminological, sociological, anthropological or psychological study. It is not a research study in the classic sense of the term, if only because the sample of interviewees in no way represents the entire population. Nevertheless, this book does include case studies and examines some of the existing theories of decision-making.

The purpose of this work was to examine whether the decision-making process which leads to murder - the most significant decision in a man's life and death - is in any way different from other decision-making processes, such as choosing a spouse, pursuing a profession, purchasing a product, determining a political standing, etc. My impression is that the factors which influence the decision to kill, albeit more extreme, are similar to those which influence other decisions.

The chapters of this book are based on the various topics of decision-making theory. One chapter is devoted to the difference between men and women in the decision-making process, and specifically in the decision to kill. Other chapters deal with group decisions, decision under pressure, escalation, and the influence of culture and society. Some chapters deal with typical decision-making topics, such as disappointment and regret, self-control, certainty and uncertainty, and rationality.

The interviews were held over a period of four years, during which time I became acquainted and even friendly with some of the interviewees. I assisted a number of them with their earlier release from prison and rehabilitation, and I am still trying to help others. It is widely thought that any person who takes another's life is an inhuman, unredeemable monster. My impression is different. Indeed, a serial murderer or one who committed an especially cruel murder might very well be a hopeless case, from whom society must protect itself by locking him up for the rest of his life. On the other hand, there are those who killed under extreme personal circumstances, which do not occur to many of us.

I will not say that anyone could commit murder under certain circumstances, but my impression is that under extreme conditions, in moments of despair, disappointment or terrible anger, most people are capable of taking leave of their senses and kill.

Following my interviews, I was unable to reach an unequivocal conclusion as to the cause which motivated one person to kill another. Generally speaking, the victim directly or indirectly threatened an essential component of the killer's life. This threat could have been a physical threat of severe bodily harm, a threat to the killer's honor or freedom, or financial threat.

I found that the threatened honor or freedom of the would-be killer recurred in almost all my interviews. Honor, in this case, could be defined as that of a betrayed husband, national honor damaged by terrorist acts of Arabs against Jews, family honor damaged by a woman behaving not according to the moral ethics of her society, or self-respect damaged by an employer, a neighbor or a violent relative.

The general public and the legal system often take an understanding view of a son killing his father for abusing his mother, or of a wife killing her violent

husband. This goes to show that in Israeli society, as well as in many other countries, there is a distinction between the brutal murder of an innocent person and killing which is caused by ongoing humiliation and provocation.

The Hebrew saying "if anyone comes to kill you, kill him first, means that killing in self-defense is permissible, and usually refers to a physical threat. The laws of a country allow the killing of one's enemy in battle. In fact, when a pilot drops a bomb on an enemy base, killing many who were no direct threat to his existence (even women and children), he would not be condemned a murderer.

Let us imagine a situation in which a soldier is being held captive by terrorists in an enemy country. He is being held as a hostage, but there is no actual threat to his life. He is "only" deprived of his freedom, and occasionally humiliated. If this soldier were to find himself in a situation which enabled him to kill his captors and escape, would he be considered a murderer?

The terrorist is perceived by the soldier, as well as by the law, as the enemy who "comes to kill you," although there is no actual threat to the soldier's life. If the soldier were to kill the terrorist and escape from captivity, he would certainly be seen as a hero and not a murderer.

The execution of a traitor by a country or an organization is not regarded as murder, but as safeguarding the security of its citizens. The Bedouins, who execute a female family-member who has sex out of wedlock, or the Saudis, who stone to death people who commit various crimes, explain their actions as an attempt to safeguard their independence and their religious and cultural freedom.

It is understandable, although we need not necessarily agree, that there are people, tribes or nations who regard certain actions as a threat to their very existence - a threat, which in their view would justify the termination of the threatener.

In the book of Exodus 20-23 we find examples of crimes punishable by death: "Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death," or "Anyone who has sexual relations with an animal must be put to death." If any religious sect in any Western country were to adhere to these laws, they would be charged with murder, although they would be relying on basic biblical sources.

My point is that it is generally accepted that certain values, such as national security, independence, religious freedom, democracy, and so on, justify the killing of people who undermine them, whereas other values, which could be of no less importance to the individual, such as freedom of speech, freedom of movement, equality between the sexes and between family members, opposition to violence and coercion and so on are not justifiable reasons for killing another human being.

The time I spent with life-convicts and my involvement in their troubles, compel me to depart from the context of this research and state my personal views on their rehabilitation. In my view, some killers can be rehabilitated, can return to society and can contribute to it. After a long period of imprisonment and appropriate psychological treatment, it is possible to determine who is deserving of an early release and who is not.

I would like to wish all prisoners, and especially the lifers, success in the rehabilitation processes available to them in prison, and a speedy release from jail. They can then show themselves and others that the very same sensitivity which was their downfall, could become the key to a new and interesting life.

I hope that the public will also open their hearts to released and rehabilitated prisoners. From my experience I know that those who volunteer time and effort in helping these people, more than contributing to others, contribute to themselves.

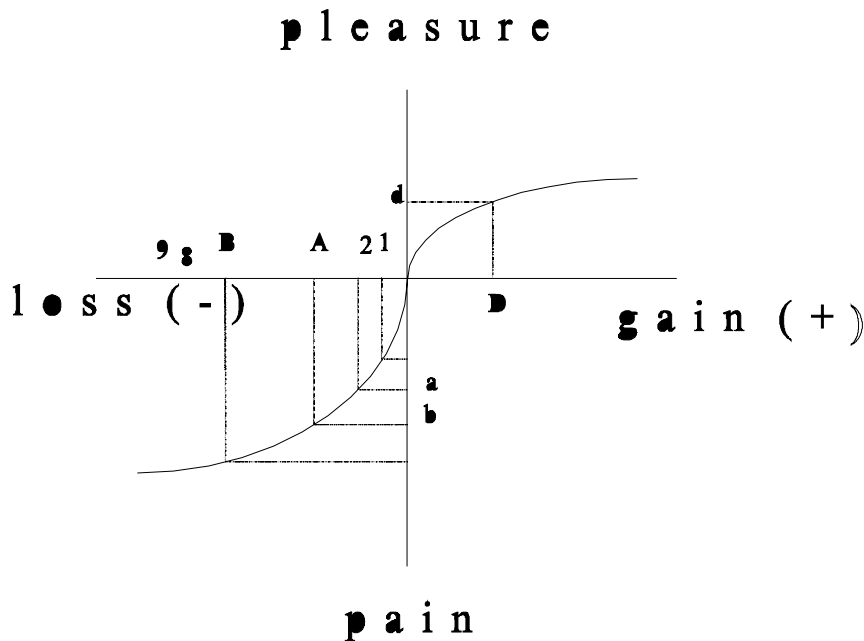
Nothing to Lose

In certain situations some people decide to act in a radical fashion and to accept risks they would not normally take. A terminally ill patient would be willing to participate in an innovative but dangerous medical experiment, even though chances of success were extremely low. A soccer coach, whose team is losing a crucial match in the World Cup Series, might throw caution to the wind and instruct all players to play an offensive game. What these examples have in common is that the decision maker is in a "nothing to lose" situation.

Why doesn't the coach give similar instructions at the beginning or at the middle of the game? Because toward its end, it doesn't matter whether the loss is 1:0 or 2:0. A loss is a loss. On the other hand, at the beginning of the game there is still a lot to lose. If the opponent were to lead 2:0 at half-time, the chances to even the score would be very slim; however, at the end of the game there is really nothing to lose.

This feeling of nothing to lose is described by the Value Function of Prospect Theory (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979), shown in Diagram 1.

Diagram 1: The Value Function According to the Prospects Theory



The horizontal axis depicts the objective gain or loss. For instance, point D could represent a \$100,000 gain, point A a \$100,000 loss, and point B a \$200,000 loss.

The vertical axis expresses the subjective pleasure or pain felt as a result of the gain or loss. The pleasure from value "D" (\$100,000 gain) is marked by "d," and the pain from value "A" (\$100,000 loss) is marked by "a."

The part that interests us is the left (negative) side. This describes how much pain we suffer when bad things happen to us. We can see that the larger the loss, the greater the pain, but a double loss does not necessarily mean double pain. The marginal pain decreases.

The distance from A to B shows double the loss, but there is hardly any difference in the feeling of pain (a to b). The diagram also shows that the difference between 8 and 9 years imprisonment seems smaller than the difference between 1 and 2 years.

Diagram 1 also shows why people prefer greater pain for a short period of time to less pain over a longer period of time. It is preferable to be at point B (where the losses are greater) for one minute, than to be at point A for two minutes. Although the objective loss at point B is double, the pain we feel, whether physical or mental, is not much worse, and the shorter time span definitely compensates for it. This is why people would rather swallow bitter medicine in one gulp, rather than sip it slowly. This is also why we tend to remove a plaster in one pull, rather than step by step, and also probably why God struck the ancient Egyptians with ten separate plagues, rather than one massive plague.

Beyond point B the curve is almost flat, meaning that a person can feel she or he has reached the limits of pain, and that whatever else may happen cannot increase this pain. This is a state of despair, in which an upsetting moment of humiliation or provocation can tip rational thinking and cause murder. After a lengthy period of humiliation, pain or suffering, some people come to the conclusion that they have nothing to lose in their lives and decide to take radical action, such as murder or suicide, even if it will bring about their own death or life imprisonment.

This decision is a "gamble" for the highest stakes, in an effort to escape the emotional tangle they feel they are in, by committing an act of despair with poor prospects (as far as they are concerned). The prospects are usually not even consciously defined.

The story of Mel Abrahams is that of an old man, whose daughter-in-law abused him, his son and his grandchildren. He states that his first year in prison was much easier than his last year at home. He murdered his daughter-in-law after she defiled the memory of his beloved wife. His suicide attempt following the murder shows that he acted out of a "nothing to lose" feeling.

Mel Abrahams

I was born in the United States in 1922. I was an officer in the U.S. Army, and retired in 1948 during the Israeli War of Independence, when I came to Israel as a volunteer. This is where I met my wife, who was a kibbutz-member and a soldier.

It was love at first sight. She was a very special girl, very lively. She was a real woman, not a plastic doll. She was my full equal and partner, and supported me all my life. It is difficult to describe. She was my whole life. I was never bored with her. She shared all her experiences with me. Life with her was a never-ending joy.

In 1975 she had to have minor surgery to extract a tooth. It turned out that she was allergic to the anesthetic, and she died during the operation.

For a month and a half I refused to see anyone. Every time I saw a woman I would ask: "Why is this woman alive, while my wife is dead?" I visited her at the cemetery every night. On her birthday, our anniversary and holidays, I would sleep by her grave.

After my wife's death, I quarreled with my family. They thought I should sue the hospital and the doctor for negligence, but I was against it. In my view, there was no amount of money which could compensate me for the loss of my wife. I couldn't bear the thought of buying anything with money I would get from her death.

Relatives and neighbors thought I was crazy, but I cut myself off from them. When I returned from the cemetery at night with mud on my shoes, my daughter would scold me for dirtying the house. It hurt me that she was concerned with nonsense. I lived in a world of grief and loss. After the "Shiva" (the seven days of mourning), my daughter said, "That's it. The seven days are over now. We have to go back to everyday life." I was unable to return to everyday life without my wife.

I raised our young son, and our relationship was good. He looked like my wife and reminded me of her. When he finished his military service, he married a girl who showed no interest in our family business - a small printing house.

Actually, nothing interested her. She was always complaining that my son was too involved in the business, and that he didn't spend enough time with her.

They had a boy and a girl. She loved the children, but in the same way that I like to stroke the fur of my cat. She didn't look after the children, didn't read to them, and took no part in their education. She was obsessed with cleanliness.

She would clean the house from morning to night. Sometimes, she would leave the kids and spend the entire day at her mother's. I felt that my son had married a vacuum cleaner.

A year after they were married, my son wanted a divorce. Divorce was a foreign concept to me, and I convinced him not to.

My relationship with her was fine. I helped her with various things, and we had long talks, not on philosophical topics, but I enjoyed her company.

They stayed together. She was interested in nothing. So I took care of the children. And I also took care of her because I felt for her.

The relationship continued in this way for a number of years. Again, my son wanted a divorce. When he told her this, she began to hate him.

At first, I didn't take sides. Her brother-in-law began advising her, and every time she and my son had a fight, she filed charges with the police, on the grounds that he beat her. It was easy to be convinced of this since her lips were always blue because she suffered from a lack of oxygen. She had acquired a certificate from a doctor whom she had convinced this was the result of my son beating her. My son was arrested for twenty-four hours. This was something that had never happened before.

I started taking his side. When they fought, she would chase him with a broom. We lived in a small town, in a semidetached house, and their home was right next to mine. He would run to my house and hide. I would open the door and see her waving her broom and cursing him, "Bastard, I wish you would die."

She was prepared to give him a divorce, but demanded a lot of money. Once they even went to see a judge after they had finalized the terms, but she changed her mind at the last minute and demanded more money.

The kids were totally neglected. As she didn't cook and my son was busy with the business, the children had their meals at the home of a foster family. During the divorce trial, the judge asked whether either of them would be willing to leave home in order to keep the peace. She refused. He agreed, and moved in with me. The judge also ruled that the children would eat at my place.

She went to her mother every day and returned in the evening. The kids were not allowed to play with their toys because it was "messy." They were not allowed anything because everything was messy. She taught them to take care of her instead of her taking care of them. The house was sterile and lifeless.

One day I opened a sprinkler in my yard. The wind changed and some water got into her open veranda. When she returned home from visiting her mother and saw the water, she panicked and yelled that I was conniving with my son to mess up her house.

She became hysterical and started cursing me. Among other things, she said, "Your wife was trash and will never be more than trash." She knew how much I loved my wife and how sensitive I was on this subject.

I slapped her. There was always a gun in the house (with a permit). I went inside and wanted to take the gun out of the closet and shoot her. While I was taking out the gun, I understood what I was about to do. I ran over to my neighbor, and she followed me. I asked my neighbor to tell her never again to say a bad word about my wife.

I drove to the police station and lodged a charge against her. She charged me with assault. She took advantage of the fact that she was a sick woman faced with two men. The police found it easier to take her word against mine. From this moment on, life at home became hell.

When the judge had ruled that the children were to eat at my house, I hired a woman to cook for us. My son and this woman became involved and he moved in with her.

His wife's complaints against him grew worse and worse. A police car showed up at our house at least twice a week.

The kids would walk past me, but were not allowed to speak to me. They were sad and frightened. Whenever their mother was hospitalized, the children had a few happy days. They spent time with me and I noticed how my granddaughter resembled my wife.

Ever since my daughter-in-law was nasty about my wife and I almost shot her, the idea to shoot her was never far from my mind. I saw my son and my grandchildren suffer. For a whole year he couldn't enter his own home. Her family was constantly there while I sat in my house. Every evening when my son went to the cook's house, I would see him look at me as if to ask, "Well, how will this end?" I decided that I had to put an end to the situation. There was not enough money to finance her demands for a divorce and I could see no solution.

There was no point to my own life. My wife was gone, my son was suffering and I was losing my grandchildren. I felt like a rag, not like a man. My family was being destroyed and I was doing nothing about it.

I spoke with my son and told him I was thinking about killing her. He took me to his lawyer who warned me not to dare do anything irregular. But I said to myself, "I have no choice. I must kill her." The idea didn't leave my mind.

I meant to kill her, and then commit suicide. I wrote some farewell letters but every time I saw her, I couldn't kill her. If she were a man, I would have killed her a long time ago.

A day before the murder the kids were at my house. The little girl didn't want to go back to her mother. My daughter-in-law came to fetch her and yelled at me.

That same day, I received a letter from the Internal Revenue Service demanding an enormous payment as a result of false information she had given them.

The next day my son had army reserve duty. I went to the printing house and when I returned, she was hanging the laundry. She started yelling at me and cursing me. It didn't bother me, but when she said, "Your wife is trash," I ran to get the gun. I went back outside, and fired a few bullets at her.

She stared at me. She didn't understand what was happening, and began to fall. I didn't look at her. I was afraid to watch. Despite all my anger, I found it difficult to think that I was killing a woman.

I went back inside and shot myself in the head, but was only wounded. Then I took forty sleeping pills and fainted.

My aim was to sacrifice myself for my son and grandchildren. I was old. My wife was gone and my son's life was hell. I wouldn't have deserved to be my wife's husband if I hadn't saved my son.

My son was deteriorating. He had never been to the police before. The children's situation was also getting worse. Instead of growing up happy and independent, they were trained to look after their sick mother. The situation at home was truly terrible. Even the first year in prison was much easier than that last year at home.

I felt as if I, my wife, my son and my grandchildren were one. Some people die for an abstract notion, such as the homeland. I did what I did for my own flesh and blood. Why did I have children? To just sit there and do nothing? My deed restored our family. Now I can look my wife in the eyes.

Rationality

"What have you got to eat?" asked the customer.

"We have fish and hot dogs," answered the waiter.

"Give me a hot dog, please," requested the customer.

The waiter returned a few moments later and said, "I forgot to tell you. We also have grilled chicken."

"Oh," said the man, "In that case, bring me fish."

This well-known joke goes to show that, although there are supposedly logical principles according to which we are expected to behave and reach decisions, most people tend to break them quite consistently.

The "Regularity Condition" states that an option cannot be made more attractive by adding another (inferior) option. It is unreasonable to think that a third option (chicken) should change the priorities of the fish and hot dog.

Who do you think will win the 100-meter race in the next Olympics, Carl Lewis or Ben Johnson? Would you change your answer if you knew that the author of this book was also participating in the race?

Diagram 2 is based on a paper by Shafir, Simonson & Tversky (1993), and describes a situation in which a young woman is struggling with the question whether to marry Albert - a rich, but foolish man - or Ben - a poor, but clever, man. The decision is difficult. Albert is rich enough to compensate for his stupidity and Ben is clever enough to compensate for his poverty. One day she has a blind date with a third candidate - Carl. Disappointingly enough, she discovers that he is both stupider than Albert and poorer than he. What do you think will transpire after this unfortunate date? Whom will she choose - Albert or Ben?

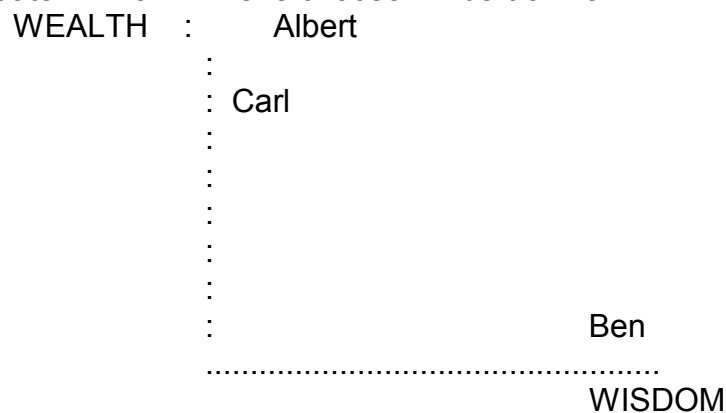


Diagram 2: The preference of one option over another when adding a third option, which is clearly inferior to one, but not to the other.

Carl's entrance into the picture caused the preference of Albert over Ben. Albert is more attractive than Carl on two counts, whereas Ben is superior to Carl in one characteristic (wisdom), but inferior in the other (wealth). This creates an "optical illusion," by which Albert's worth is greater than Ben's.

There is no conflict in the choice between Albert and Carl. Albert is preferable on both counts. The choice between Ben and Carl presents a conflict because one is more attractive than the other in one characteristic.

When struggling between two alternatives (A & B), having a third option, (C) that clearly is inferior to one of them (A), this (A) alternative then becomes the more attractive one. This behavior conflicts with the principles of rationality.

Logic would have it that if one prefers wine to juice, and juice to water, one would prefer wine to water. It makes sense. This example expresses the principle of transitivity, which says that if A is more attractive than B, and B is more attractive than C, then A is more attractive than C.

Lack of transitivity leads to a magic circle in which there is always an option that is more attractive than the one chosen. The most famous example of this is May's (1954) choice of a mate.

Let us imagine three possible mates: Abe, Bart and Clint. Their characteristics are shown in the following table:

	WISDOM	BEAUTY	WEALTH
Abe	very clever	ugly	comfortable
Bart	clever	very beautiful	poor
Clint	stupid	handsome	millionaire

If a woman has to choose one man and the method of choice is by the "most good" qualities, then Abe would be preferable to Bart by two out of three (wisdom and wealth), Bart would be preferable to Clint by two out of three (wisdom and beauty), and Clint would be preferable to Abe by two out of three (beauty and wealth). Whomever the potential bride chooses, there will always be a better candidate in two out of three counts.

Although the principle of transitivity sounds very logical, many people use different methods of decision making that do not adhere to this principle.

"Do you have fresh milk?" asked the lady in the coffee shop.

"Certainly," answered the waiter.

"Then I will have black coffee, please," said the lady.

Logic would have it that, if the lady had preferred black coffee when there was fresh milk, and if she had preferred black coffee when there was no milk, she would have preferred it whether she knew about the fresh milk or not.

This principle is called the "sure-thing principle," and it states that if one prefers A to B when a certain condition exists and also when this condition is missing, then the existence or nonexistence of this condition should not be relevant in making the choice between them.

Even though the principles of rationality seem reasonable and non-controversial, most people often break most of them or all of them. Further examples of this can be found in the closing chapter under the heading, "Information and Decisions."

The story in this chapter is that of Danni Shmueli, who reacted to the murder of his girlfriend and other Israelis by Arab terrorists by firing a missile at an Arab bus.

The interview with him shows that, had he known for certain that his action would cost lives, he might not have fired the missile. His aim was revenge and deterrence, not murder.

On the other hand, had he known for sure that the missile would miss the bus, he probably would not have fired it. What is the use of firing if you do not intend to hit the target?

The decision to fire was reached only because he was not sure whether people would actually be killed. This might also be the reason why he aimed at the roof, and not at the center of the bus. The uncertainty of the result of the act was, in fact, the motive of the act itself. As absurd as it may sound, from Danni's point of view, there existed an inner logic.

Danni Shmueli

The Arab village of Beit-Zafafa is right next to my home neighborhood, Katamon. It is called "the village of dispute," because part of it is divided by the so-called Green Line - the 1949 cease-fire border. When I was four years old, I used to run away from home and play with the Arab children. I had lots of Arab friends. I especially remember a boy called Kamal. My mother was very worried and angry when I went to his village and would beat me when she found out that I had played there. She didn't hate Arabs. She was just afraid that I'd step on an old land mine. Kamal's father was a bus driver, and would take me home when it got dark. He always told me that my parents must be worried, and then he would drive me home.

In 1977, after a change in government, our economic situation improved. Salaries were higher and prices were lower. During the previous Labor government, the underprivileged neighborhoods were in a really bad way. I remember Charlie Bitton (the leader of the Israeli Black Panthers Movement) organizing children to break into shops. They stole milk, oil and sugar, and distributed it to needy families. When the Likud party won the elections, my parents were very joyful. They expected improvement for large families and for underprivileged neighborhoods. And it actually happened. There were more social-workers and we were cared for. During the Labor government, no one cared about us. I remember when Golda Meir came to Katamon on a visit. She was pelted with rotten tomatoes because the situation was so bad. Twelve-member families lived in tiny 700 square foot boxes.

When the War in Lebanon broke out in 1982, I was seventeen years old. I enlisted in the army before I was of age, and was posted to the Golani infantry regiment. Toward the end of my basic training, my girlfriend was killed by a terrorist bombing in Jerusalem. Seven or eight people were killed by a bomb on the number 18 bus in Jerusalem.

Although I had Arab friends, my "romance" with Arabs began in my childhood memories. My mother's family lived in Ma'alot and after the famous terrorist attack, we went to visit them. I remember my fear about everything that had happened there. I especially remember my fear in the building's stairwell, where there were still bullet marks on the walls. An entire family was butchered in that building. My grandfather used to sit on the stairs and recite psalms. On the morning of the terrorist incident, he went outside at dawn and saw the terrorists passing by. They saw him, too, but didn't harm him. My relatives believe that he was spared because he was a righteous man.

I spent a lot of time with my family in Ma'alot. I remember going down to the shelter when Katyusha missiles were fired at the town. I also remember all the terrorist attacks in Jerusalem. One Friday, they placed a refrigerator full of explosives in Zion Square and a bomb in a nearby restaurant. There was an explosion, and, if I'm not mistaken, thirty people were killed. My uncle was badly

injured. On that same Friday, I was on a bus with my father and we heard the explosion and saw the awful sights.

In addition, there were bombs in the Mahane-Yehuda market and in other places in Jerusalem. I became aware that we were being slaughtered far too much. I remember how upset I got when I rode the bus and the driver would turn up the radio to hear an announcement of yet another terrorist attack. All the passengers would say, "Why don't we hit back? Why doesn't the government do something?" There was great anger and feeling of helplessness. People would look around suspiciously to see if there was an Arab riding on the bus. They would check to see whether there was a plastic carrier-bag or bomb beneath their seat with their feet, so that others wouldn't notice their fear.

I used to say to people, "You are all corrupt. You grumble and grumble, but do nothing. You don't participate in demonstrations, and don't protest in public." At the time, I wasn't thinking of private acts of reprisal. But people's reactions upset me very much.

All this unrest started after the Likud party won the elections. During the Labor government, the population was united and everyone believed that the army was doing its best. The Likud government feared reactions from the left-wing parties, and did not eliminate the terror. I, too, was beginning to lose confidence in the government.

From the age of sixteen, I used to frequent Arab restaurants in the Old City. The greater the divide between the right and left wing parties, the more hostility I felt from the Arabs, who before that had always treated me with their famous hospitality. They started wearing small flags of Palestine on their clothes, and to recite slogans. Commerce interested them less and less. I blame both the left and the right wings, for dividing the people, which served to aide the rise of the terrorists.

About ten months after my girlfriend was killed, I was on leave in Jerusalem. At that time, my unit was stationed in Lebanon. On Saturday morning, I was visiting a friend who was on reserve duty. He was a duty ambulance driver. We were sitting around and talking when a call came in for him on the radio about a murder that had been committed near the Karmizan Monastery. I was in uniform, and had my weapon with me. I joined my friend in his ambulance, and that is how I came to see the bodies of the two students who were murdered. The police, the army and the secret service were already there. I overheard one of the agents saying to an army officer, "Look how filthy the Arabs are, and how their minds work." He said this because the victims' open wallets were lying next to their bodies, and their "Peace Now" membership cards were displayed. The students had probably tried to show their killer that they belonged to a movement which supported the Palestinian struggle, and that there were also good Jews. But the killer ignored them and murdered them, as if to say, "A good Jew is a dead Jew." Everybody present there was very angry.

This was the incident that broke me. No more! If there are people opposed to my views, even if they do consider the good of the country as much as I do, but

they claim that our regime is criminal and that the army is Nazi, and if, despite all this, they are sentenced to death by the Arabs, it means that the Arabs do not want peace, that they do not even want to hear those that speak to them in their own language, and that their hatred is general and aimed at the total population. At that moment, right next to the two bodies, I vowed on their blood, that as soon as the mourning week for them ended, an Arab family would be in mourning. I felt as if their blood was crying out to me, "Jewish blood must be avenged!"

I remember returning home that day in a state of shock. I came home, told what had happened and cried. This wasn't the first time I had seen people killed. Another incident was in Lebanon when we were summoned to the site where four reserve soldiers had been killed by a bomb. I saw the bodies and felt very bad, but I knew that war was an ugly thing, that both sides got hurt, and that that was the price paid in war. I felt that Israel had entered the lion's den, and when one enters the lion's den, one can expect to be bitten. I thought about these men's mothers, and how they knew that their sons had been killed in action. The grief of a mother whose son is murdered is greater than that of a mother whose son is killed in action. He died for a cause. A mother prays for her son when he goes to battle, but knows that harm may befall him. But, the mother of a student hiking in the countryside who had feared nothing is suddenly told that her son was murdered. In Lebanon, I saw many deaths of our troops but I never felt the desire for revenge as I did when the attacks were in our own country.

When we arrived at the site of the murders at eleven thirty, the sight was horrible. I felt so helpless. The moment of seeing the bodies and the blood and remembering making the oath is branded on my mind. The embers remain hot even after the fire goes out.

I thought to myself, The murderer will be caught and tried in a military court in front of the Israeli flag, and he will scorn it all, and will lift up his hand in the court's face in a "victory" sign, and say, "I regret nothing, and when I'm released, I'll go out there and kill more Jews."

I felt that all I had been taught about the sanctity of human life that people should not be killed, that only God can decide, had vanished. The shocking sight, the pain and helplessness I felt caused an overwhelming rage. Rage is lack of control over your thoughts, as if you had drunk a whole bottle of wine and your head is heavy. You see only one picture before your eyes - that of dead Arabs who have to be shown that we will not present the other cheek. Let them feel the same pain we feel.

This lack of control can be compared to an angry man who wants to enter a room and the entrance is blocked by a chair. Without giving it a second thought, he kicks the chair. He does not even consider that he might break his leg and be in plaster for six months. Instead of moving the chair, he kicks it out of the way in a rage.

I got home, told the story and cried. These were tears of anger, not of relief. On Saturday night my family saw the story on the TV news and everyone became very upset that these incidents happen more frequently and that it was unsafe to

travel anywhere. An argument broke out about who was to blame. One blamed the "Peace Now" movement, another Mr. Peres or Mr. Shamir, and each had their own reasons. I was silent. I was caught up in my anger and thoughts of revenge.

On Sunday I returned to my unit, but came back home the next day. I followed the reactions of politicians and of citizens to the incident in the press and media all week. I was annoyed that the "Peace Now" reaction was harsher than in other incidents. Usually, their announcements stated that the mutual killings would only end with peace, and they put some of the blame on us. In this case, their announcement was much harsher, and without the usual addition. I was annoyed because in other cases, when the dead had not been "Peace Now" members, they said that they were killed because they had been wandering around the occupied territories. This time it wasn't said. If a right-wing person had been killed, they would have added something about the occupied territories to their announcement.

Another thing that annoyed me was that everyone condemned the incident, but no one did anything. When the killer was caught, they said that he was crazy. Yair Zaban, a left-wing member of Parliament, said that the killings would end when there was peace and when Israel no longer occupied Arab territories and nonsense like that. No one found a way, beyond condemnation, to give the people a sense of security. The general feeling was - oh well, another couple was killed, life goes back to normal until the next act of terror, and the record plays on.

I kept thinking of revenge all that week. The killer was apprehended before I made my move. I was hoping he wouldn't be caught. I preferred him to be free. As long as he wasn't caught, the pain felt by the public was greater. When he is arrested and brought to court, the relatives of the victims see a smiling man, who feels like a national hero, and who will soon be released and laugh at us all. Until he is caught, he is anonymous, not a hero, and maybe one or two of his friends know what he did.

There was no element of reassurance in the whole process of his capture. On the contrary, things would happen that would make me even more angry. The fact that I didn't want him arrested had no connection to my decision to kill Arabs. Maybe, if he had not been captured and I had not seen a rerun of the same old script, I might have stopped myself in the last minute, and not fired. The fact is that I had sworn revenge after my girlfriend was killed and ten months had passed without having done anything. Maybe, if they had caught the terrorist who caused my girlfriend's death, I would not have controlled myself and reacted then. The actual capture of the murderer of the two students fired my anger and stressed my lack of confidence in the government and the judicial system.

I had a cache of explosives and missiles six weeks before the Karmizan murder. The aim of my arms cache was to hurt Arabs, not to cause death. About a month before the murder, I set off a bomb in an Arab coffee shop in the Old City, but I used explosives that could at the very worst maim, not kill. The police thought that it was a regular criminal action. Actually, ever since I was in the army and felt so affected by my girlfriend's death, I was determined to commit actions that would make the Arabs feel insecure about Jews who would be willing to take revenge. I

was sure that I wanted to scare them, not kill them. I had grenades and could kill indiscriminately, but the thought of taking human lives disturbed and deterred me.

On Sunday, eight days after the murder, I saw an Arab leave an abandoned house near mine with a bag in his hand. The neighborhood children played in that house in the afternoons. I was not in uniform, but I had a pistol that I had borrowed from someone. (I felt uncomfortable with a rifle in the Old City so when I went there for shopping or recreation, I carried a pistol for safety.)

I called out to the Arab, "What have you got in the bag?" He saw that I was in civilian clothes, so he wasn't worried and answered, "What is it to you?" I sternly asked him, "What were you doing in the abandoned house?" "I went in to piss," he answered. It seemed suspicious, so I asked him to open the bag. He refused, ignored me, and continued on his way. I pulled the gun out from under my shirt, stood in front of him, and aimed straight at him. He stopped when he saw the gun. I demanded that he empty the bag onto the floor, and warned him that if he made a suspicious move, I would shoot him in the head. A neighbor saw what was happening from her window and called her husband. He came out with another neighbor and they called my mother. When I told them that he might have planted a bomb in the abandoned house where the kids played, they got hold of him and questioned him. He told them that he was on his way to work, and had just stopped to piss. We entered the building, searched it and found nothing, except that he really did piss. So we let him go.

The neighbors praised me for my vigilance and badmouthed the Arabs. An hour later, I went to see a friend. The adrenalin was still pumping. A week had passed since I had sworn revenge and the incident with the Arab fueled my determination. The neighbors' encouragement also made me feel justified in what I was about to do.

At that moment, I knew I was going to do it, but had no idea how. I only had one goal - to harm them.

I returned home, put on my uniform, took my Galil rifle, and went to my arms cache. I was wondering which action to take. That was when I decided to fire a missile at an Arab target. I had no special intention to kill, but to act and react. I wasn't interested in the question whether people would die or not. The main thing was to ease my rage.

I took the missile, my rifle and two magazines, just in case. I put the missile in a bag, and started toward Gilo (near Jerusalem). I thought I would fire the missile at an Arab house. But I didn't like the plan. I am not sure why. Maybe because I couldn't find a good escape route. I also wanted justice to be seen, not only done, and by as many people as possible. I searched for a prominent target. I was familiar with the area. I knew that there were lots of Arab houses and vehicles and that I had relatives in the neighborhood, where I would be able to hide.

I took a bus to Gilo. One of the thoughts that went through my head as I was watching the peaceful passengers was that everyone was minding their own business; one was going to the market and another to the doctor. Music was playing on the radio, and suddenly there was a news bulletin. Everyone became

alert in case something happened. The announcer said that a missile had been fired, and everyone's heart lost a beat in fear that Jews were killed again. Then it turned out that it was fired on Arabs, and they all sighed in relief. I was curious to know what the reaction would be. Would they be happy or contained? I knew that no one on the bus would condemn me. People who take the bus are hard working, simple people. They live the daily reality. They are not politicians. They are simple and react according to their instincts. In my imagination, I saw one man rise up to condemn the act, but all other passengers argued with him and reminded him of the atrocity that had taken place the previous week.

I got off the bus at Gilo and searched for a target. I saw Arab houses, but decided against it. I walked to the crossroads out of Gilo and the road to Bethlehem and looked for a moving target. I considered a car, a taxi, or maybe a bus. As I was walking, I became more and more tense. I felt uncomfortable.

At the crossroads, I hid behind some rocks. I removed the missile from the bag and aimed it at all sorts of vehicles without actually charging it. On my right, a bus arrived from Bethlehem. When I saw the bus, I made a final decision that a bus would be my target. I thought it would have the proper effect. There are many people on a bus, and even if many were not hurt, the experience would cause them fear. I decided to move to where more people would see the attack. I hitched a ride to the Sultan's Pool, which is a large public garden in a valley, visible from the Old City by Arabs and from Mishkenot Sha'ananim on the western side of the city. The irony of it is that the Hebrew name of the valley, Gai-Ben-Hinom, also means hell.

I found a hiding place overlooking the busy Hebron Road used by both Arab and Jewish vehicles. Above me, in Mishkenot Sha'ananim, there was a balcony which made a good observation post from which I could observe the border patrol units. I wanted to know how often they went by, so that I could escape after the shooting. I found out that the patrol went by every fifteen minutes. I went back down, and settled in among the bushes.

I took out the missile, charged it, and waited for a bus to go by. I also waited for another border-patrol to go by. Then, three minutes after the patrol, I spotted an Arab bus. I couldn't see how many passengers were on it, and I didn't care whether they were adults or children. Nevertheless, I hoped children would not be hurt. I have a weakness for children.

The bus arrived. A missile has two sights - the front one is big and the back one is small. The bigger sight can adjust ranges. I set the range for forty yards. The bus came up the hill slowly. I pulled the safety catch to launching position and aimed at the center of the bus. As soon as I got the bus in the sights, I pressed the safety catch, but nothing happened. The catch was stuck. I aimed the missile at the sky, so that I would not hit any Jews by mistake, and that was when I noticed a police car right behind the bus. At that moment I was very, very nervous. It was as if my blood had frozen and my body was turning to stone. It was sheer luck that I hadn't fired. I would have been caught on the spot. I regarded this as an omen, that fate did not want me caught. All this time, I was still kneeling between the bushes. My pulse was racing as if I had run a hundred kilometers. Despite this, I felt

hypnotized as if I was in a trance. I could not have stopped myself, even if I had wanted to. It felt like I was floating. At the same time, I felt fear of an unknown nature. We must remember that I was about to do something that was against my upbringing, but, at this point, I could not retreat.

I was sorry that I had been in the situation to see the murdered students, and I was sorry that I was now in this situation. Anyway, there was nothing that could have made me retreat and abort the operation. I decided that when the next bus entered my sights, I would aim at its roof, not at its center. I cannot explain why. Maybe, the values with which I was brought up made me prefer wounding people as opposed to killing them. Maybe I thought that I would not take lives, and they would be pardoned by fate, not by me. Maybe I wanted to give myself the feeling that, no matter how horrible and cruel a thing you do, Jewish compassion makes it difficult for you to kill. At any rate, I wanted to lessen the odds of people getting killed.

I saw another bus coming. I pulled the safety catch again and made sure that it was released. I aimed at the height of the roof, and when the bus entered my sights and I saw that I would be firing at the roof, I pulled the trigger and there was a launch.

Disappointment and Regret

Disappointment and regret are very significant to the understanding of decision-making under uncertainty. Disappointment is caused by the comparison between our achievements and our expectations. Regret is caused by the comparison between what was actually achieved and what could have been achieved (Bell, 1982, 1985). We sometimes regret decisions that we made or could control, and are disappointed by things we could not control.

One does not regret the fact that it rained during a football match. One might be disappointed by the poorly played game or by the fact that one got drenched, and regret not having brought an umbrella.

To some, the criterion of decision making is not the wish to maximize their success, but the wish to minimize the maximum disappointment (Minimax Disappointment) or regret (Minimax Regret) expected from the various alternatives.

There is a famous saying, "The greater the expectation, the greater the disappointment." Great, passionate love gives rise to great expectations, and may when thwarted, cause deep, and in extreme cases - intolerable disappointment.

The tale of Dan Lerner, unlike others in this book, is not based on a question-and-answer interview. It is the summary of a book written in prison by Dan Lerner himself.

The story begins with great love and high expectations, and ends in bitter disappointment and horrible death.

Dan Lerner

My story, written from the bottom of my heart and with great excitement, tells of a great love for a splendid woman, a wonderful life with her and a terrible ending. I hope the reader learns to love her as I did, and comes to understand how such a great love and such a happy life could suddenly turn into despair so deep, that it is expressed in so terrible an action.

As usual on Monday nights, I was playing bridge at the club in Rishon-Lezion, which I also ran. "Hello, good evening! Are you Danni? Could you give me details about the bridge club?" That was how Sara showed up out of nowhere and came into my life. She spent the entire evening at the club but didn't really grasp all the competitive rules. My gentlemanly side was awakened, so I invited her to my house on Wednesday night to play with some friends. Sara was pleased with the invitation, wrote down my address and phone number, and left hers.

On Wednesday evening I was on tenterhooks. Would she show up? Will we talk about bridge or will more than that happen?

When Sara arrived, I introduced her to my wife, whose name was also Sara. We sat in the living-room and discussed bridge. I could not take my eyes off her all evening. She was not very tall, plump, long dark, almost black hair and brown eyes. Her smile came easily and was genuine. I noticed that she wore no jewelry, no wedding ring, except for a very special silver bracelet on her right hand.

We spoke about bridge for a while, and then moved on to other topics.

"What do you do? Do you have a job?"

"I am a silversmith and jewelry designer."

"Then why aren't you wearing any jewelry?", I wondered.

She smiled. "I have gained a lot of weight lately and my fingers are too fat for my rings."

"I hope you are not ill . . . "

"No, no! I'm pregnant."

"Pregnant? It doesn't show at all! What month are you in? Are you married?"

"What is going on here?" I asked myself.

Sara laughed. "Of course, I'm married. I have a five-year-old son and I'm seven months pregnant."

"Shit," I thought to myself. "Me and my romantic dreams. A married woman, seven months pregnant, and I'm looking for adventure."

Sara came to the club for about two months, but there was no real contact between us. Then she suddenly stopped coming. She was like a meteor, flashing across my sky, lighting it up and disappearing. Only her memory remained with me.

Five years later, toward the end of an evening at the club, I noticed a pretty woman in a suede jacket with a fur collar, broadcasting, "Hug me!" I was drawn to

her like a magnet, like a moth to a light. I approached her and, almost mindlessly, said, "Hello, do you play here?"

"Don't you remember me? I was here five years ago, and we played together."

"Sara? Are you Sara Bergman?" I nearly shouted. "This is unbelievable! I would never have forgotten you. You have changed completely."

"She must have undergone some trauma or drastic change in her life," I said to myself. I had no idea how right I was that evening.

I drove home in a state of confusion and shock. I, who was excited by every beautiful woman? I, who had an amazing memory, should forget a woman that I had once fancied?

The reason for this was that she had lost thirty pounds since her pregnancy, her face was thinner, and her hair was now very short. I found out later that she had also had some very bad years. She had been diagnosed for cancer, undergone surgery, and was facing divorce.

I wanted her twice, without realizing that it was the same woman. There was clearly no mistake. This was fate.

I awaited the following week with bated breath. On Wednesday, I felt like a boy on his first day at school. Despite all my confusion and amazement the previous week, I noticed that she had been wearing a pair of beautiful earrings, the same bracelet on her right hand, but no ring. Not even a wedding ring.

I was hopeful. Maybe she was divorced, maybe separated from her husband? I had always avoided affairs with married women.

Despite my infidelities in my first marriage, I never had anything to do with a married woman.

But, alas! The lady didn't show up. I decided to wait one more week and then start an investigation campaign. I did not want to seem overeager or to disclose my intentions, but I knew that this time I would not give up.

The lady of my heart did not show up the following week either. I found out from a friend of hers that she had gone abroad with her mother and would be back at the club two weeks later.

The day arrived. I shaved and got all dressed up. I poured a bucket of after shave over myself, and tried to hide my stomach under a sports jacket.

There she was. "Hi, Sara, how are you? Where have you been and what have you been up to?" As if I didn't know.

"Hi, Danni, what a nice welcome! Why are you so handsome today?"

"First of all, thanks. Secondly, I still feel I owe you for ignoring you last time, so I waited at the door to greet you, and to apologize once again."

I proposed that she be my partner in the mixed-couples bridge competition, and she agreed. I felt great. If the building hadn't had a ceiling, I would have probably picked a star out of the sky for her.

We arranged to meet at her house to discuss our game strategy. I imagined that I would be able to surmise a lot from the visit about her family situation and what was really going on there.

I noticed two names on the intercom label in the entrance and on her door. The name, Sara Bergman, seemed to glitter, but it also said "Sara & Ami Nir." Meaning what? Was she still married? Living alone? I couldn't tell.

We sat in the dining room with cards, pen and paper and talked bridge. I was all hot and bubbly inside and could not believe she didn't feel it. It was good to see her up close and talk to her without other people around. I wanted to navigate the conversation on to other issues but didn't dare. I felt it was still too early, and I had a strong feeling that there would be time enough.

Suddenly, I heard a key in the door, and a man entered. "Hi, let me introduce you. This is Ami and this is Danni, who is going to be my bridge partner." Then she went back to her notes.

After our first game as a couple, I drove her home in my car.

"Maybe we could ask ourselves to coffee in your house, and get to know each other?" I asked when we got there. "Just a moment," she said, "Drive on a bit." Sara looked at the cars parked under her building, and said, "OK, let's go up."

We were received at the door by a sweet, cheerful puppy. Sara said, "Hi, Doggie. This is Danni and he is a welcome visitor here." "Thank you," I whispered dizzily.

"What do you say we take him out for a midnight stroll? The kids probably didn't and he is looking forward to going out."

"Gladly," I answered, and imagined a walk in parks and woods.

We walked and chatted. Doggie jumped from side to side and to my joy wound his leash around us. Sara told me about her life and her work and I was charmed. She had studied art from the age of seventeen and moved to Europe when she was twenty-one.

Despite many ardent admirers, short-term boyfriends and some marriage proposals, she preferred to return home after five years. She married Ami a short while later.

Time flew, it got late, and Doggie became tired. The conversation was flowing, and each one of us wanted to tell more and more, but we both had a full workday ahead of us. We went up for a cup of coffee and parted at three in the morning.

I arrived home in a state of great excitement. My head was full of her words and her smile. I knew that it was the start of a wonderful, new relationship. The chemistry between us was amazing. And it was clear to me that, even if my romantic hopes were not realized, I had still found a wonderful friend, a good listener, interesting and extremely attractive. I was walking on air.

All the following week, I had a stupid grin glued all over my face. My dreams and daydreams were all about her and I couldn't contain my longing and expectations for Wednesday. I cannot see how my wife and friends didn't notice my strange behavior. It was clear to me that I was going through the marvelous process of falling in love.

I, of course, drove Sara home again at the end of our next bridge evening. "Shall we take Doggie for a walk, or go up for coffee?" I asked.

Sara smiled, checked the parking lot and said, "Let's go up."

I asked her as gently as possible, "May I ask what you keep looking for in the parking lot?"

"Let's go up. I'll explain over coffee."

Her apartment was quiet and peaceful and her husband was not present, like last time. He was either out or asleep. Doggie received me with great joy.

"To make a long story short," she said, "after twelve years of marriage, my husband and I are separated, and he has left home. He has still not found appropriate housing, so he occasionally sleeps here. When I saw that his car was not parked downstairs, I knew he wasn't home."

"I am sorry to hear that," I said, and thought to myself, "Liar. You couldn't have heard better news."

"Is your separation final?" I asked.

"Yes," she answered deep in thought, "I have been unhappy for years, and have been thinking about divorce ever since my son was born five years ago."

We sat quietly for a while and then I started telling her about myself. I told her about my happy childhood in Jerusalem, about the army and my university years, during which I had studied Computer Science. I told her about my marriage, about Gali and Dror, born two years apart, our home in Rishon-Lezion, and my job in Tel-Aviv.

Finally, I said that my own marriage was not very good and that both my wife and I knew this. I was groping my way for a while now toward divorce, but the truth was that I was afraid to leave home and live on my own.

We continued chatting into the night. The night became old and the morning young, and all we wanted was to hear more and more. Both of us had a strong need to unburden. There was fabulous chemistry between us, but we had slightly different views on this friendship. Sara saw me as a friend with whom she liked to spend time. I, on the other hand, desired her wildly, although I did nothing about it. I knew for sure that, a rash step on my part might put an end to all we had between us. It was almost light outside when we parted.

We met the next day in Tel-Aviv by chance. We walked the streets a bit, and, as we were parting, I saw (or imagined) a naughty glint in her eye. I bent over and kissed her cheek. Sara didn't object, but regarded me with affection mixed with slight bewilderment. I gave her a questioning look, and she said, as if in answer, "No, I'm not angry at all. It is just strange that I expected this." I broke into her words, "And it seems strange to me because I knew that, although you might not have been expecting it, you surely would not mind."

Telepathy, or this knowledge without words of what we thought or wanted, was very prominent in our relationship. During our life together it happened any number of times that one of us answered an unasked question or did something spontaneous that was exactly to the other's liking.

I counted the days and hours till next Wednesday. My life revolved around waiting for our next meeting. I felt like a teenager looking forward to his first date. I reached for the phone many times, especially during the day when it was

comfortable for me to talk and when I could expect her to be home. But after giving it more thought, I decided not to rush things.

As soon as we met, I felt that Sara was different, troubled by something heavy. "Something happened?" I asked.

"Yes," she said and added hesitatingly, "I'll tell you tonight after the game."

After the game she said, "Don't drive me home. I want to get away from town, and I need some fresh air and quiet."

I drove to Palmahim beach. We walked along the shore barefoot. Sara was silent. I sensed her difficulty and waited patiently. Finally, the dam broke, and Sara told me that some years ago she had discovered a growth on her leg which was suspected to be malignant. After a biopsy, she was summoned to the hospital for emergency surgery. It turned out that she had Melanoma - skin cancer - and that the growth had to be removed immediately. In order to clear the area of any remnants of the growth, they removed a round bit about 4 inches in diameter and half an inch deep. Sara referred to the deep scar as "the ashtray."

She was in the hospital for seven months. During that time, she had painful and tiresome injections around the wound. As a woman is always a woman (and Sara was most definitely that), she had asked the surgeon to do some plastic surgery on her breasts, "as they were already cutting anyway." And he did.

One of the main reasons for her wish to break up with her husband, she said, was that she felt he had not supported her at all during the operation. He slept by her side for two or three nights, but beyond that, hardly ever came to visit, and even left the care of her two children to her parents. Her husband prided himself on the fact that he did not miss one day of work while she was in the hospital. This hurt her very much.

All following tests were negative and four years later the doctors were optimistic.

We returned to the car and drove home in silence. When we arrived, we remained quietly in the car.

"And what now?" I asked. "I understand that something new and frightening has happened."

"That's right," she said. "Two days ago in a routine checkup they discovered a lump in my right breast. The doctor recommended a biopsy and I have an appointment tomorrow morning."

"I only now realize," she added, "that my life is in danger. The skin cancer could have spread. I was complacent up till now, and I suddenly realized the seriousness of my situation."

In answer to my question she said, "The appointment for the biopsy is nine o'clock in the morning and then I wait. If the answer is positive, I will go straight into surgery. If not, I'll go home and wait. If the growth is malignant, we'll know within a week, and if the answer is negative, I'll know for certain in three weeks time."

"I want to take you to the hospital and I'll wait for you there," I blurted out, not thinking of all the technical and personal problems involved.

"Thank you!" she whispered, "but my parents are taking me, and I have a friend, a nurse at the hospital, who will stay with me. If I'm discharged from the hospital tomorrow, she will take me home."

I stroked her head affectionately, and left my hand on her neck.

"I will call you tomorrow afternoon, and if you are not home but at the hospital, I will visit you there."

Sara smiled, looked at me with affection, and said, "Aren't you worried that your wife will find out, or that your schedule will be disrupted?"

"No," I answered immediately. "You are more important, and it pains me to think of you there alone without support. I really want to come."

Sara thanked me and promised that if she had to remain in the hospital, she would let me know.

We parted earlier than usual. Sara went up alone, to get some sleep and to fast in anticipation of surgery.

I drove home very bothered. I began to see that this woman was very important to me and that I was in love.

I stopped by a phone-box on the way home. I had to talk to her again. It was almost two o'clock in the morning, and the phone barely gave one ring before she picked it up. "Yes, Danni?" said my beloved. I was amazed. I was struck dumb and could not find the words I wanted to say.

"Are you there?" she asked.

"Yes, yes. It is me. You amazed me and for a moment I couldn't speak."

"And what did you want to say?"

"Something like good luck, although that's silly, or better still, that I hope the results are negative, and that you come home soon, and that I want you to know that I will be thinking of you, and be well, and no matter what, if you need anything, call me at home or at the office, and . . ."

Sara laughed and cut me off. "Good night. Sleep well. I promise that if I need anything, I'll call. And one more thing - many thanks."

I woke up the next day cranky and upset. The operation had probably started around nine o'clock, and as I was sure that the results would be negative, she would probably be home around noon. I tried to make the time move faster by magic. I looked at my watch every few minutes - Uri Geller style - but it didn't work. If I had a dollar for every look at the clock, I would be a millionaire.

At a quarter past two I couldn't stand it any longer, and called her house. There was no answer. An hour later I tried again. The phone rang and rang, and when I nearly gave up, it was picked up.

"Sara?"

"Yes, Danni. I just got in. Everything is fine. The first analysis showed that it was only a fatty lump, and nothing more."

"I know!" I said. "Or rather, I wanted to believe that all along. I am very glad."

"Thank you," she said.

Then there was silence. What do you say to a woman, who you suddenly find you love and that she is your whole world? "Hold on a second," I begged. I put

down the receiver and cried with joy, with happiness, with relief, and God knows what else. I was lucky that no one came into my office. I picked up the phone, and Sara asked, "Has anything happened?"

To my astonishment I answered simply, "No. I just had a little cry, and now I feel much better." (What happened to the Israeli macho, who does not shed a tear? I didn't seem to mind admitting it. Free, free.)

Sara hesitated and didn't know what to say. "I want to come over and see you this evening," I said, "even for five minutes. Please. I must."

"How will you explain it to your wife?"

"I'll manage. Just tell me when is convenient and I'll be there."

"Come at nine, if you can, and I would be glad if you stayed for more than five minutes."

I bought two chocolate-coated marzipan, gift-wrapped them, mumbled something to my wife about an unexpected bridge game, and escaped.

I felt slightly guilty and uncomfortable about my actions. I was not naive about our failing marriage, but my previous affairs were usually brief. I never got emotionally involved and I never left the house specifically for that. It was always during or immediately after work or after lectures I would give. This time I felt that I was really cheating on my wife because I knew that I was eternally and willingly lost in Sara's charms.

I was expecting a suffering woman in bed, possibly feeling sorry for herself, but, instead I encountered a lady at the door, smiling from ear to ear, fully dressed and full of strength.

I handed her my humble gift. "I just want you healthy," I said and dared to add a kiss on her cheek.

We drove to the old city of Jaffa and then to the Bat-Yam promenade where there were some open coffee shops. I bought her ice-cream and we strolled on the beach. The moon came up and the sea was magical and wild. The beach was deserted. We were the only lunatics there. I got carried away, and couldn't control myself. I dared to hug Sara. "Gently," she said, but did not pull away, "I still have an open wound." We walked along slowly in the sand and uttered all sorts of confidences, secret wishes and plain thoughts. It was magical.

"Why, as a matter of fact, are you hugging me? Do you want to protect me?" she asked.

"No," I admitted, "I am just falling in love with you."

"In that case, I must ask you not to hug me any more." She was thoughtful and serious.

Hurt, I removed my arm, and the magic disappeared. We went back to the car, spoke of betrayal, love and friendship. Sara talked of her failed marriage. She said that her husband had been unemployed for some time, was not supportive of her at all, and that she had to support the family. In addition, their sexual relationship was unhappy, to say the least. She was constantly unfaithful to him, and had a lover for the past eight years. Her conscience bothered her, which was

the main reason she wanted a divorce. We parted near her house. This time I didn't dare more than say "good night."

I felt that I might have been too pushy, although Sara herself told me that she had had some very fast affairs, when she lived in Europe.

A few days later, I left work at around nine o'clock in the evening, and on the way some kids were selling fresh figs by the roadside. I had an idea. I stopped to buy two large bags.

On the way home, I drove by Sara's house, rang her doorbell, and she opened the door. "I just dropped by for a minute to bring you fresh figs, and I'm on my way," I said.

"You know, you are something else! How did you know I was crazy about figs?"

The next evening, Wednesday, everything between us was relaxed and peaceful. On the way to the club, Sara turned to me and said, "You spoil me too much. Two surprises in less than a week, and the amazing part is that both were exactly to my taste. I might get used to it."

The bridge game went fine, and on the way home Sara automatically invited me up for coffee. It was a warm night and we sat on the balcony. We told each other about old loves and affairs. We were very open about it, and I was surprised by her directness, especially when she spoke of the opposite sex. From a woman's point-of-view I heard many interesting things from her, about men and about various adventures she had had in Europe.

Sara had been sexually active from an early age, usually with older men. She described the European men as nice and polite but "wimps." Sara also described the man of her dreams, and strangely enough, except for one great love, not one man fit this description. Sara preferred dark skin, dark hair streaked with grey, and an athletic body. She also told me about her current lover of eight years, a married man, who fit her fantasies. I wondered how often they met, and she told me that she saw him once or twice a week and that it was quite enough. She was not interested in more. She was seeking a peaceful "romantic front" and wanted time for herself and her children.

I heard more than a hint in that and asked her whether it applied to me. "To you, too," she answered, "I am sexually satisfied and looking for some peace and quiet. I really don't need a romantic adventure. On top of that, you are married, and although it never bothered me in the past, I have no wish to hurt your wife or family."

This hurt me. I added, foolishly, "We might let time tell."

"Look," she said. "You are a dear friend, but you don't fit any romantic expectation of mine. You are not my type, and I don't think we will continue as bridge partners much longer. Please, don't take this wrong, but I am not attracted to you."

"Strong words," I thought to myself. She, of course, had a right to say it, but what kind of man can hear from a woman that she is not attracted to him, and then continue as usual?

I was already in love with her, I wanted her and what I got was a bucket of ice water right on my bald spot.

I remained motionless, serious and hurt. There was a long silence, and bothered by it, she got up to make more coffee.

When she returned, she asked me hesitantly, "I realize I hurt your feelings?"

"Very much so," I answered, "but I'm not angry. You feel what you feel and these things should be out in the open. I am not comfortable hearing them and I am hurt that you have a lover, but it is your life and your wishes and I cannot make any demands. I know that feelings cannot be programmed."

We chatted a bit more, and when I got up to go, I said, "I'll be honest with you. I intend to continue coming here, for a friendly chat or as a guest. I also clearly intend to court you. You surely don't owe me anything and it is your privilege to tell me if I'm pressuring you. In any case, I'll pick you up next week for the bridge game.

Sara was a bit taken aback. "I respect you very much for your honesty, and in any case, I want you as a friend."

The next bridge game on Wednesday went as usual. Routinely, we went up to her place for coffee. This time we sat in the kitchen. Sara reminisced about Europe, and then I made a second round of drinks. When I came back to the table, I

couldn't help myself and leaned over to stroke her hair. I was apprehensive, but she didn't reject me. I went further to stroke her neck, and when she didn't send me to hell, I came closer and stood close behind her. My hands were all over her head, neck and back. I bent down and kissed her neck. Sara cuddled responsively and I carried on. My hands wandered on, and encountered expected curves. As usual, she was not wearing a bra and her loose dress made it easier for me. I continued kissing her neck and nibbling her ear and turned her head gently toward me. I kissed her cheek and forehead, her nose and eyes, and finally her mouth. Her response was appropriate and we kissed at length until we both had to come up for air. I lifted her up gently and hugged her tightly. I was shaking so much with excitement that I had to lean up against the kitchen cupboards for support. We kissed again and again. Our hands were all over each other. Mine unbuttoned her dress, hers unbuttoned my shirt. We hugged fiercely, feeling the body heat of each other. If we hadn't been holding each other so tightly, I would have collapsed. We left the kitchen without a word and went to her bedroom. The coffee cups were all but forgotten in the kitchen.

When it was over, I naively asked, "I understand from your enthusiasm and excitement that you have not been with a man for a long time?"

"Since you asked, I will be honest with you, as we have been until now, and as I hope to be in the future. I slept with my lover this morning."

I was shocked. I didn't think that I had ever had sex with a woman who had been with another man that same day, and what's more, had been so cooperative and enjoyed it as much. The truth is that I was also hurt. I had known she had a

lover, but he had never been very real to me. We lay there silently for a while, smoking. "I hate the name Sara," I said to her quietly.

"You'd be surprised," she answered, "I don't like my name either. Choose your own name for me, and I will get used to it."

"Sherry," I said spontaneously: "Sherry will be my name for you." I rolled the name around on my tongue. To me she always was and will be Sherry. The early dawn and the last rays of the setting sun, the cold winter sun in Denmark and the blazing desert of Andalusia in Spain. Sherry - I thought to myself - is similar to her real name, sounds French (meaning my dear), and tastes of good Brandy.

We were together six years. Six years and nineteen days to be exact. She was Sherry every day. In bed, at home, on the street, around guests, on trips, on the phone and even during arguments. Even on her last day, the worst day of my life, and during that terrible fight, she was Sherry. To this day she is Sherry to me and will be forever.

I walked around naked in front of her. Sherry gave me a certain look, and we were at it again. Sherry was the wet answer to any man's dream. I was aroused to the limit for the first time in my life. I hadn't even known that a man could get this aroused. I reciprocated with interest.

We showered together, laughed and enjoyed ourselves. We tickled each other, hugged and kissed. And of course, the most natural thing happened - we started a third round, which ended as well as the previous ones.

I had to go. It was five o'clock in the morning and my wife got up at five-thirty. I apologized and felt like a fool, but Sherry was the one who calmed me down. "Go on, I understand and I'm not angry." I promised to call during the day and rushed home. I crawled into bed, just before my wife's alarm went off. I fell asleep with a smile on my face, hoping that the smells of love didn't give me away.

After the bridge game on Wednesday, we hurried "home." Without much talk, we went into her bedroom and enjoyed each other to the fullest. It was clear to both of us that we had turned a new leaf in our lives.

We were both preoccupied, and Sherry had a strange look on her face. "I am trying to figure out why I feel so relaxed and peaceful with you. Sexual satisfaction adds to it, of course, but you seem to transfer a relaxed feeling to me. I would like to spend a few vacation days alone with you and to get to know you better."

"Are you still seeing Nehemiah?" (That was her lover's name.)

Sherry hesitated. "The truth is that he called this week and I put him off. I don't know what to do with him now, or whether I want to go on seeing him."

"I think that you will have to end the affair sooner or later.

It seems to me that what we have between us is permanent and it will not work with another affair."

"I think so, too. But give me time. It isn't simple to end a twelve-year acquaintance, a ten-year friendship and an eight-year sexual relationship. Don't forget that he was my support and escape from a bad marriage."

The thought that she was seeing another man and having sex with him drove me mad, but I knew enough to shut up and wait. I knew that I mustn't push, and I had no moral right to do so. I was married myself.

Three weeks later the topic came up again. She told me that she had met him but asked my forgiveness in advance. "I couldn't bring up the subject of breaking up, although that was the reason I initiated the meeting."

"And what happened?" I asked with apprehension.

"I slept with him," she whispered.

I felt a stab of jealousy, like a knife in my heart, but I didn't say a word.

"Try to understand," she said, "This is a complete surprise to him, and there was no way to tell him. But, because of our relationship and the comparison to you, I finally decided to end the relationship with him."

Sherry did indeed end it with Nehemiah. We were together and didn't separate until that damned morning.

The trip to Crete was wonderful. When we were seated in the plane, there was some fuss with people finding their seats and putting their bags away and then it was quiet. Suddenly, with no warning, I burst into tears. Tears of joy, happiness, relief and relaxation. Sherry held my hand tightly, while I hid my face in her neck. Slowly, I calmed down.

"What happened?" She looked at me with a puzzled, but loving look.

"I just felt this tremendous relief. I was probably tense, fearing something would go wrong with the trip. Now I felt like I was floating. No work, no clients, no wife and kids, no everyday worries. It's just you and me and eight days ahead of us with no lies and no games. Just you and me as real as possible.

So, it all just came out at once. What tears are forbidden? It's a free country, isn't it?"

Sherry smiled lovingly and said, "You should know that I admire you all the more for it. You are for real, you don't play macho games, and you are not afraid to reveal your feelings." After a while, she grinned and said, "We made it, didn't we?"

The plane was taking off when I turned to her and said, "I am crazy about you. I don't mind admitting it and being romantic. I am just so crazy about you that if you asked for a star from heaven, I would get it for you."

"I also love you very, very much. I find it difficult to express my feelings. I am not as free as you. But, I have been considering my feelings for a long time, how I feel when you're not around, how I react to you, and I know that, beyond great sex and true friendship, I am in love with you. I need you, I want you, and I am not going to give you up."

She ended her words with a big kiss, snuggled up to me, and whispered in my ear, "Do you know when I realized that I really loved you? I felt a stab of jealousy when you went home one night. When I realized that I was jealous of your wife - I understood."

I could not believe my ears. Sherry jealous? She and jealousy were two totally foreign things. Now I knew that our relationship was truly and fully mutual.

I cherish these moments. These were moments of true and perfect love. Two people who became one - no give and take, no accounts, with total acceptance.

We landed in Crete, settled in at the hotel and went down to the beach. We walked along the shore, and came upon a small village right at the water's edge. We sat down at the local taverna, drank ouzo, had Greek salad and souflaki. Greek music, blue sea, yellow sand, naked women, and lots of calm.

We sat there daydreaming until sunset. Who needs more? The outside world disappeared and I was deep in the eyes of the most beautiful of all women.

We traveled the island, discovered remote villages, ate in fishing harbors, were "abducted" to a local wedding in a tiny isolated village where we were the guests of honor. In short, every minute was a celebration. We hardly slept. We went naked to the beach and the pool. And, we loved. We loved during the day and during the night, in bed and on the beach, and we felt young, beautiful and in love.

Sherry decided to give me a haircut on the first day. I was quite bald, but I used to comb the hair from one side over my bald spot to hide it. Sherry found this very funny. We spoke of this and I asked her if she minded my baldness. She said she didn't. She would have been pleased if I were not bald, but she didn't mind and even found it sexy. In short, she took a pair of scissors and trimmed off all the long hair. Strangely enough, when we returned to Israel, no one, not even my wife, noticed the change.

On our last evening, we went to the harbor and sat in a taverna at the water's edge. It was beautiful, romantic and sad. We were going back the next day to everyday problems, work and little lies, and saying goodbye to what was the best holiday of our lives. In the years to come we always remembered this holiday with longing. It symbolized the beginning of our life together.

I told Sherry, "My beautiful woman, I intend to get a divorce as soon as possible. This week has taught me how shallow my marriage is, based only on convenience. I want you and I will not lie or cheat about it anymore."

As soon as we returned, I started divorce proceedings.

Sherry's birthday was coming up. I wanted to surprise her with something special and unusual. During the month of September, we had been in Jerusalem a number of times - she for her business and I for mine. When we met for lunch, she excitedly told me about a beautiful carpet she had seen in an old carpet mender's shop, how she loved it, and that it was much too expensive. On the way home, we drove by the shop, and Sherry showed me the carpet hanging on the wall. I made a note of the place, but didn't say anything. The next morning, without telling her, I drove to Jerusalem especially to buy it. But, alas, the man didn't open his shop at all. I drove over a few more times - for nothing. I made inquiries with the neighboring shop keepers and found out that the old man was ill and hardly ever opened the shop. I asked the next door shop keeper if I could phone him every day, just to find out whether the carpet mender was there. Three weeks later he showed up. I drove straight to Jerusalem, and was happy to see that the carpet had not been sold. It really was a lovely Persian carpet with deep reds and blues, and in

excellent condition. Years later, I took it for an appraisal, and was told that it was a hundred and fifty years old, and in excellent condition, because it had been on the wall and not on the floor. After lengthy negotiations, I paid six hundred dollars in cash and the carpet was mine.

On her birthday, I took the carpet up to her apartment, and opened the door very quietly. Luckily, she was in the kitchen. I pushed aside the old rug in the dining-room, and laid out the new one. I then went into the kitchen, loudly wishing her "Happy Birthday," kissed her and handed her a large bouquet of flowers. She was a bit startled, because she hadn't heard me come in, but pleased to see me, and then I saw a flicker of disappointment. She must have thought, "Where is the gift? He always surprises me and this time only flowers?" She didn't say a word. I smiled to myself, and said, "The real gift is in the living room. Why don't you bring me a bottle of beer and come out there? That's where the real surprise is."

I sat down in the living room. Sherry prepared a tray, a couple of glasses of beer and kept peeking at me from the kitchen, trying to guess what I had brought her. She came out of the kitchen and started walking toward me with the tray.

Her gift was on the floor and she had to step on it on her way. The changing expressions on her face were amazing. First came bewilderment. "What is this carpet doing here and where is mine?" Then identification, "Is this the carpet from Jerusalem?" Then pleasure, "How lovely!" And then, great joy. You had to have seen her face that evening to realize what true joy looked like.

Our second trip together was to Europe. On this trip we started a tradition that was easy to keep up on this trip but more difficult on subsequent ones. We made it our custom to make love at every place that we stopped and spent the night. It was easy on this trip because we spent a number of nights at each place. On other trips, we usually only stayed at each place for one night, but kept up the tradition strictly and joyfully. Every place we stayed was put on the map. Sherry aroused me deliberately with words, hints and descriptions, and I finally "gave in."

In the spring, when we were both formally divorced, I moved into her apartment and we lived together like man and wife.

There was one thing which cast a shadow over our lives, mainly Sherry's, but mine as well. Her relationship with her eldest son, Yaron, was intolerable. He was a problematic child and many psychologists had given up on him. He was overbearing and rude. When I first met him, he was eleven years old, a great tyrant, egocentric and had a great need to control his surroundings. Totally selfish, he could finish an entire cake or lunch for the whole family without batting an eye. Sherry and Yaron were constantly fighting. Screaming, arguments and rude comments on Yaron's side, which always ended with a slap to his face, and then it was quiet for a couple of days.

After three years of life together and burning love, with quite a few problems which stemmed from the fact that I had moved in to her home and family, I knew there was no choice, but to propose once again. Sherry was ambivalent. Two characteristics of mine bothered her: my verbal aggressiveness toward her friends and family, and my shaky relationship with Yaron.

I suggested a psychologist, and after a number of sessions and with the psychologist's blessing, we decided to get married.

Our first married year went by in a flash. We did in one year what it takes others to do in ten. I worked long hours, sometimes even on Saturday. The market was "hot" and sales were up. I left home at six in the morning, and returned at seven in the evening with a song in my heart. Sherry was working and selling. I helped her a lot with finding new clients, and saved her many trips into town.

Our life was wonderful. I was happy, especially with the official seal of our union. I liked my job and Sherry was blooming. The relationship with Yaron had improved, my kids visited often and we spent a lot of time together.

Things began to get worse at the beginning of 1989. Recession was rearing its ugly head, unemployment was on the rise, many businesses were closing and many workers were being fired. The computer business was hit badly, and in a short while I lost my job, too.

Sherry was not very happy because the jewelry business was also going downhill. Her private clients disappeared and the shops almost didn't buy.

I had never been in such a situation. In the past, I would only change jobs if I had a firm offer, and better compensation.

The first months of my unemployment were a bit strange, something between a vacation and a happening. I redecorated and repainted the entire house, went to many interviews, played in and ran many bridge tournaments, and even went out more with Sherry. In addition, I helped her quite a bit in her workshop, drove her around and improved her sales.

We went to Europe for Rosh-Hashana, and returned to a country rife with unemployment, full recession, the Intifada, too many new immigrants, economic difficulties and failing diplomacy.

Not a pretty picture. I sent applications and went for interviews, but nothing was offered, and I began to despair.

Something was slowly sinking in with Sherry. The combination of her fallen knight, the silent despair, the insecure economic future, and the fact that I was almost always at home - changed something in her. She was fine in many aspects. She was served breakfast in bed. I cooked dinner and looked after the house. I gladly ran most errands. I spent time in her workshop and widened her clientele, but something was damaged.

In addition, things got worse in our relationship with Yaron. He came home only to eat and take money.

In my view, the main reason for the deterioration in our relationship was the "humiliated-man syndrome." I used to be successful, popular, easy going, a good provider, a decisive boss and a sales manager. And here I was, sitting at home with no foreseeable future.

Unfortunately, Sherry did not share her thoughts with me, and nothing real ever came up. If she had raised the issue, we could have talked it over, shared each other's fears or reservations, and gotten through it together. But, Sherry never said anything, behaved as usual, and I had no idea.

Usually, any crisis between a couple manifests itself first and foremost in bed. But, nothing had changed in that area. On the contrary, now that we had time on our hands, sex was great, slow, lengthy, full of pleasure and gentleness, and very often. It happened more than once that we felt the urge in the middle of work, and just moved from the study to the bedroom to continue what we had started. At times, we just stayed in the study.

One morning, at the end of November 1989, in the car on the way to Tel-Aviv, Sherry said to me, "I have something to tell you, and ask you to hear me out. Don't say 'No!' without giving it some thought."

Opening sentences like this always bode evil.

"There is an eight-day bridge tournament in Budapest, Hungary and I want to participate. It is sometime in January, and I intend, of course, to pay for it with my own money."

I didn't get it. "You want to go alone? Without me?"

"Yes, I want to go alone, without you."

"Before I say yes or no," I whispered, "could you tell me why you want to go without me?"

"I will tell you," she said, "I must get away from all the pressure for a week by myself."

I was very hurt. My wife, my companion of the last six years, wants a break? The mistress of my heart wants to go away alone? I ended up agreeing with a smile, but deep down inside me a great chasm opened, and jealous thoughts and doubts went through my mind, doubts about the change in our relationship, jealousy about this trip without me, and many question marks.

What has changed? What does "all the pressure" mean? What kind of break did she have in mind? Did she just want the distance, or was there more to it? I had a beautiful wife, nice, open, popular and desirable, and with a long history of unfaithfulness to her first husband. Even if there was no Israeli "target," I felt certain that over there, on her own, she would be the target of every male, whether Israeli or foreign, single or married. I was certain that, until now, Sherry had never been unfaithful to me, or even glanced at another man. But I felt that something had changed, and I was afraid that in a strange place she might not think twice and might get carried away.

In the past, we had many discussions about unfaithfulness. I knew that, for me, there was no other woman. During my first marriage I was always on the lookout, seeking adventures.

This time I was not interested in other women, nor did I want them. In the past, whenever I saw an attractive or pretty woman, my first thoughts were, "How can I reach her?" "Is she easy?" "Married?" "How will I get her into bed?" Things with Sherry were totally different. A beautiful or sexy woman could catch my attention for being a beautiful woman, and I could compliment her and tell Sherry what an attractive woman she was. Sherry was in a similar state. She was more mature, she was in love, and in addition, as she pointed out, our sex life was very fulfilling, and she had no intention of looking for anyone else. She also didn't

believe that another man could satisfy her the way I did. She had a saying, "If someone wants to screw me, he will have to screw my mind properly beforehand." Her meaning was that the physical attraction in itself did not interest her. She said that if anyone really interested her, she might be tempted to try him out in bed.

This was what worried me. If she met a good bridge player whom she would find interesting, they would have an excellent opportunity to get to know each other and who can tell the end?

I, of course, didn't say a word about all this, but I felt lousy, and these thoughts kept going through my mind.

December passed. No job. Sherry was organizing her trip, and my heart was black. I tried to keep up a good face, to compliment her and encourage her, but the truth is that I was hurt and anxious. We made love more and more often in a frenzy, as if to get in as much as possible before her trip. I don't know if she was aware of my feelings. Occasionally, when asked by friends how come she was going away alone, I answered with a smile, "She is tired of me and wants a break." Sherry never denied this.

A few days before her journey, she said to me, "Get yourself someone. You will be here for a week on your own - take advantage. Have fun. Go out and get a woman for a week."

My response was instantaneous, "You have gone too far! You know very well that I have no such intentions. And if someone catches you, then good for you." After some thought, I added from the heart, "But, please, be discreet, not in public and not with an Israeli."

She was amazed. "What do you mean? You, who are so jealous and anxious, are wishing me an adventure?"

"I hope you have a good time, play bridge well and enjoy yourself. I hope you don't have an adventure and I wouldn't want you to, but if you do, please let it not be with an Israeli. I wouldn't want to sit at a table with you, at some tournament, with a man who spent time in bed with you and cuckolded me.

Unfaithfulness with a stranger is one thing, but to face someone who knew you in the biblical sense, and cast me mocking looks - not that!"

"I want you to know that I'm not going away for that reason. If I wanted to betray you, I could do it here without spending all this money on a trip to Hungary. I am going to have fun, enjoy myself and have a rest from you. When I return, I will find it easier to cope with the future."

I returned from the airport in a state of withdrawal. I knew I was returning to an empty house. It wasn't the physical emptiness that bothered me, but the thought that Sherry had deliberately left me, that she had gone away to get away from me. It was awful, and I couldn't bear the pain of separation.

I telephoned the hotel in Budapest at various hours, but could not reach her. I knew she was touring in the mornings and playing bridge in the evenings, but where was she late at night? I was jealous and very anxious.

In the months after her return, I continued looking for a job. I went from interview to interview, from one personality test to the next, from letters to telephone calls, and nothing happened.

One evening, out of the blue, she said to me, "Sit down, I want to talk to you." Nothing had prepared me for the terrible shock of her words. "I want a trial separation." She spoke slowly but clearly. "I want you to leave the house, rent a place for three months, and we'll live apart for a while."

I choked. The shock was physical. I felt as if I was being strangled. I had to calm down for some minutes and just try to get some air. "What? Why? How? What happened? What does leave the house mean? Trial separation? Please, explain."

"I am very pressured," she answered. "You hang around the house all day and bug me. I don't see you ensuring our economic future. Your relationship with Yaron, and mine, is terrible, and I want to improve it and I have big question marks about the future of our relationship. I want a timeout period to view it all and see where to go from here."

"This is impossible. Love like ours, such a wonderful relationship, great sex, fantastic trips, and you want to throw it all away because of a few months of unemployment? It does not make sense. I don't think I can handle it."

Sherry burst into tears. "Don't think for a minute that I find it easy. I have been thinking about this for months. It is a very tough decision, and I regard it as my personal failure. I think that both of us, and especially I, mismanaged our marriage. I should not have let you move into my home and family so quickly, and I should have been more assertive in my demands that you alter your behavior toward my children, family and friends. That was what bothered me, your verbal aggression and arrogance to everyone. I should have been more adamant about psychological counseling and some results."

I wept, groveled and would not accept or understand. "You want me to just move out? Rent a place for three months and live alone? And what will our relationship be like during that time? Will we visit each other, go out together, travel, what?"

"Take anything you need and keep a separate household. You won't iron my clothes (I loved to do that, and it was one of my "jobs") and I won't do your laundry. We will speak on the phone, and we will go away, or visit each other, or play bridge, or even go to bed together, when we both want to. All will be arranged beforehand by telephone."

"I would still like to find out what your objective is and what will happen after three months?"

Sherry answered very seriously, "I want to have a good look at our relationship with you away, from a distance, in correct proportions. I might discover very soon that I miss you and want you here. I will gladly apologize and ask you to come home, if you agreed. I might not miss you at all, and then I would ask you to stay away for longer. I do not know. All I know at the moment is that I am having a hard time with you, and I am asking for a timeout to evaluate our relationship."

I bought the weekend paper on Friday and read the horoscope. "Scorpio - Confusion over issues of togetherness, but do not make any hasty decisions. Taurus - Important family decisions should be postponed for at least a month, and then discussed. The interim period might lend a new perspective."

I read this out to Sherry. I looked at her and in the most reasonable way asked, "Give us one month. We have been together six years. One more month won't make that much difference. I might find a job. You might change your mind. I will try to get closer to Yaron, and I will do anything to breach the gap between us."

Sherry looked strained, confused, but finally agreed to postpone the decision by one month.

I knew I would not let her down. I understood what she really wanted, and my path was clear. She was calm and submissive, and the finale in bed that weekend was great.

Everyone around us was appreciative of my efforts during that time. Friends, family and bridge players said to me and mainly to Sherry, "What happened to Danni? He is calm, quiet, courteous, and a different person altogether." People didn't recognize me. We were always regarded as a loving couple, but during this period, despite the economic difficulties, we looked and acted like the ideal couple. I felt very comfortable. I knew that I was better accepted by everyone, and my "positive energy waves" were definitely getting picked up. It was strange that at times I negotiated between Sherry and Yaron, and at times my relationship with him was better than his mother's.

One Saturday afternoon, I came home from spending time with my children, and found Sherry in bed.

"Do you know what day it is?" she asked.

"Of course," I smiled. "Today is the first day of our seventh year together."

"That is true," she answered, "but, it is also the last day of the four weeks I gave us."

"And . . . ?" I whispered.

"Nothing has changed. I insist that you leave home and we separate for a while."

A line from a poem by Bialik echoed through my head, "Heavens, have pity on me! If there is a God, and a road to God in you - I have not found it . . ." I failed to understand her.

"Did I not fulfill your expectations?" I asked, "Wasn't there a real change? Didn't you feel any improvement?"

"There was real improvement. Everyone says so. You and Yaron became very close and you made things easier for me. But the basic thing that bothered me has not changed. You are still unemployed, I am still concerned about the future, and your presence bothers me. I must ask you to leave for a three-month trial separation."

I did not understand. There must be something basic that is not being said, and I cannot reach it. I gave up. "I will not argue anymore. I'll look for an apartment."

"Are you serious?" she asked. "You won't string me along now?"

"I am very serious," I answered. "If you still want this separation after a month of real effort on my part, major improvements felt by everyone, and now that I have a friendly relationship with Yaron - I give up. I do not understand what is happening. I cannot fight lost causes, and cannot force myself on you." I said it, I meant it, and I did it, or at least tried.

At that time it was very hard to find a decent apartment for a reasonable price. The enormous number of Jews who immigrated from Russia had caused the prices to sky rocket and the quality of apartments to deteriorate. I visited all the rental agencies, went out to get the newspapers at four in the morning, but to no avail.

I was, of course, not willing to climb seventy or eighty steps every day, or live in some remote neighborhood without a car. I could have found an apartment, but nothing reasonable.

Sherry became impatient, and joined me once or twice to check out apartments, in case I was lying to her, but realized how difficult it was. I was convinced that I had the right to a decent place to live, and not to compromise on a "dump" and at those prices.

Weeks went by. I kept looking for apartments and doing odd jobs until the last month of my unemployment allowance came, and I also got scared. I began thinking of the unhappy possibility of going back to Jerusalem to live with my parents.

One day, after some job interviews and futile attempts to find an apartment, I returned home at four o'clock in the afternoon, and met Sherry's younger son in the parking lot. He told me that he had had an argument with his mother and Yaron, and that he was going to spend the night with his father.

I found Sherry angry and upset. It turned out that she had fought with her children. There had been some screaming and a general mess. Her upset was easy to detect, and I knew that the fight with her children was not the only reason.

"Why are you so angry and upset today?" I asked.

"Everything is going wrong today," she said, "I fought with the children, my work went badly, and you are just adding fuel to the flames."

"Me? What did I do?"

"It is not what you did, but what you didn't do!" she answered viciously, "You set such high standards, that every apartment you see is not suitable."

"So that's it," I thought to myself. "You are not being fair,"

I said, "You know very well that I am seriously searching. I have seen many, but they are not for me. You cannot expect me to live somewhere in the south of town, on the fourth floor, with eighty-one steps and no elevator, for three hundred and fifty dollars a month, or in some inhuman cell of a room for four hundred and fifty?"

"No, I don't expect that, but you seem to be searching in slow motion."

"Come on," I said to her, "We have been together for six years, five of them here in this apartment, and you expect me to move out within two-three weeks and

just jump at the first apartment that comes along? I think I should try for a decent place, at least with an elevator and telephone! I don't think that is unreasonable!"

"You may be right," said she. "Just try to rush things up a bit."

"That is what I've been doing," I said. "I'm listed at all the agencies in town. I go out on Thursdays to get the early edition of the paper, what else? I am willing to promise to take the first reasonable apartment I find, no matter the price, and within a week I'll move there with my things."

Sherry seemed mollified and the atmosphere more relaxed. She smiled and said, "Luckily, I was able to relax with you last night . . ."

Sherry went out to visit a friend and I spent a quiet evening by myself, after which I read in bed for a while. In the morning I woke up to find that Sherry wasn't in bed and had not slept in it at all. I found her asleep in the guest room.

I went back to our room, showered, put on my underpants, and then noticed that her clothes were in our bedroom. I woke her up, greeted her with "good morning," and when she had answered me, I asked, "How come you didn't sleep in our bed?"

"I didn't want to disturb you."

"Disturb me?" I wondered, "You were in the room, got undressed, took a pillow, and turned out the light. How could you have disturbed me?"

"Let's just say that I didn't want to sleep with you," she said as she got up, got dressed and went into her study.

I went to prepare coffee in the kitchen, which was right next to the study and a window between them.

"Why didn't you want to sleep with me last night?"

"I will not spend another night in bed with you as long as you still live here." Just like that, plain and simple.

"And why so?" I asked.

"Very simple," she answered, "We will sleep in separate rooms as a means to pressure you into leaving sooner!"

I smiled bitterly. "How will that help? I am looking for an apartment in any case. If we sleep separately, I won't find a place any faster. We spoke about this last night, and I thought we had agreed that I was doing my best!"

"Actually, what I want is total separation. We will each sleep in a different room with our own things. Choose which room you want. I'll take the guest room."

"Sherry, what, in God's name, are you talking about? Separation, different bedrooms - what is this all about? You could refuse to have sex with me and still sleep in the same room."

To be honest, neither of us had ever refused to have sex. On the contrary, we were "suffering" from a surplus. Had she wanted to put pressure on me, she could have denied me sex, without this outward show of withdrawal. I knew there was more to it.

Sherry seemed of two minds, and then said, "I want you out of the bedroom altogether. Move into the guest room and take all your clothes and books with you."

I also want you to take your wash-things and towels and razor out of our bathroom and use the other one from now on."

I passed from the kitchen into the study. This seemed really serious and I wanted to see her properly. "First you told me to choose, and now you want me totally cut off from you, for me to live in the guest room and use the other bathroom, and for you to remain in our bedroom by yourself?"

"You even want to prevent me from using our own private bathroom? What is going on?"

The door to the bedroom had a lock, and when closed, the entire unit, including the bathroom, was cut off from the rest of the house. The guest room, on the other hand, had a sliding door with no lock and the other bathroom was for general use.

"You understand perfectly," she said. "I don't want you to enter the bedroom. It is a separate unit, and I can lock the door, and keep you out."

"I understood that," I said, "but what for? What are you afraid of that I'll rape you? You know very well that one 'no' will put an end to that. That is not the way things are between us. On the contrary, the initiative is on both sides, the want is mutual and the 'exploitation' works both ways."

"That is just it," she said. "I want to end our sexual relationship, and I know that if we sleep together, I won't be able to avoid sex."

"Why would you want to deprive yourself? The other night we made love and had great fun. We spoke of sex even when living apart. So what is your story now? Do you think that if we don't have sex, I will find an apartment faster? Where is the connection?"

Sherry seemed troubled, and then blurted out, "I want to make you move out of the apartment, and that is why I want to be able to lock my bedroom and keep you out of it. I want the right to bring other men home!"

"Did she really say that?" I thought I had misheard her. "What did you say?" I asked.

"I want to have sex with other men here at home! This is my home, and I want to feel free in my bedroom, without instructing you to vacate it."

I was totally confused. Strong and mixed feelings went through me and parts of a puzzle began falling into place. The conversation took an unusual turn, and we raised our voices.

Very excited, I shouted, "You want to bring men here, to our home, to have sex with them? Are you crazy? What am I, a rag? You are still my wife, and I still live here, even if it is your apartment."

"That is exactly what I mean," she screamed. "I want to hurt you, and badly! I know how hurt you will be if I am unfaithful to you, and I want to make you leave, and immediately. If you see a strange man here, in my bedroom, the situation will be clear to you, and then you might get the hell out!"

This was the first time we had ever had a real fight and screamed at each other. I found it hard to control myself, and I think that we both sort of lost touch with reality.

"You have gone insane," I shouted. "You are not normal. Do you mean to bring a man here and fuck him in front of me? Do you think I will take it lying down? I am not violent, but this is too much. Don't even dare think of it. You have no idea where this could end or how I might react!"

Sherry smiled ironically, and then shouted in my face, with deep disdain and contempt, "What do you think, that you are the only man in my bed? You are so wrong. I have been cuckolding you all over the place."

I went wild. "You betrayed me?"

"You bet!" she flung the truth in my face. "More than once, and with more than one man!"

"That's not true!" I bent over in pain. "You are just saying that to hurt me."

"No? You'd better believe it!" she said. "I spent the first night in Hungary with a Polish bridge player, the second night with his friend, and the next morning with both of them! Then I met Yoav, and we were never apart, in any sense, for the next four days. We fucked in bed, in the bath, in the sauna, and wherever you can imagine. We had a fully nude massage together, and Yoav encouraged me to fuck the masseur, and then I let them both "take care" of me! And it didn't end there.

What do you think, that I go to Tel-Aviv just to play bridge with Yoav? We played bridge, and many other things. I told you that we used to meet at various hotels to discuss strategy, and I came home very late, and you never suspected. Since my return from Hungary, I've slept with him at least once a week, you naive fool!"

Things started making sense, but I still could not believe it. I didn't want to believe it. Sherry with other men? Totally abandoned, with two men at the same time? With one man, encouraged by the other? This was not the woman I knew, and I didn't believe a word that she threw in my face.

"That is impossible!" I screamed. "You are lying to me just to hurt me. I don't believe you!"

"You don't?" Her voice was unnaturally high and drilled into my brain. I was feeling blurry. "Let me tell you one more thing, and then you might believe me. I fucked a young man here at home, in our bed. I met him on the street, and occasionally when you went out for interviews or meetings, I invited him over. And, let me add this. Do you remember three weeks ago, when you took the children to a movie on Saturday and I asked you when you would be home? We said two o'clock, and I deliberately brought the young man over. I was in bed with him and waiting for you. I wanted you to catch us at it, and I was hoping you wouldn't do anything because of the children."

That was taking it too far. Here in bed with a young man, and wanting to be caught?

I had to believe her. I remembered her strange behavior on that Saturday, which I could only understand in view of what she had just told me. But still, "What are you babbling about? Here in bed? Wanting to get caught? Impossible!" I refused to believe it.

She was out of control. "We did!" she yelled. "We screwed and fucked again and again and I kept waiting for you. Every time he came, I waited for a while and then made him hard again. You know how good at that I am (she pointed at her mouth). I deliberately fucked him on your side of the bed, and to keep him from coming too soon, I took your pillows and lay on my stomach wide open. But you were late, and he could barely crawl out of the door!"

I couldn't take any more. I couldn't see. Everything was red and black in front of my eyes. All I saw was her mouth, spewing venom, and hammering more and more nails into me. At that moment, all I wanted was to shut it up. To close it and end this nightmare. I was in a fury, and all I could feel was the need to shut her mouth. The same mouth that spit at me, that made that man defile my bed over and over again, had to be silenced. I raised my hand to hit her, and through a fog saw the tools on the window sill next to me. I picked one up and lifted my hand to hit her with it.

Sherry saw my intention and turned to run out of the room. I hit the back of her head in a circular motion that left her no chance. She collapsed. Her escape was cut off, and she started stumbling toward the corridor, falling and rising again.

"Sherry!" I screamed madly, "What have I done? Answer me, talk to me!" I went up to her, held her up, supported her and looked for something to hold onto.

"What did I do? Good God, how could I have hurt her?"

Suddenly, I saw the visions of her in bed with that man, and with the Poles in Hungary, and I blacked out.

Sex Differences

Do women reach decisions differently than men? Do they take fewer risks? Two studies, in which I participated (Yassour, 1992; Lampert & Yassour, 1992) show that women do differ from men, in some areas, in the decision making process.

When we compare the propensity to risk taking, we see that men state that they take greater risks than women. Comparing decisions in the area of family life, we find that women are less prepared to take risks in choosing their mate, but would take greater risks than men in order to preserve the family and save their children.

These results are compatible with the classic findings of Wallach & Kogan (1959) and Hudgens & Fatkin (1985), according to which men tend to take greater risks than women in a variety of areas, although not absolutely.

Two interesting papers compared the levels of risk-taking by children and drivers of both genders. Ginsburg & Miller (1982) found that boys take greater risks than girls at the zoo, such as riding an elephant or feeding an animal. Jackson & Gray (1976) studied the length of time male and female drivers waited before entering a dangerous intersection. They found that male drivers, especially if there were other male passengers in the car, waited the shortest period of time, (i.e., they took greater risks).

Dahlback (1990) found a correlation between the inclination to delinquency and risk-taking. It is possible that one of the reasons there are more male than female criminals is the fact that men tend to take greater risks.

Yarvis (1991) states that it is well-known that women rarely kill, and that they usually do so only if they suffer from psychiatric disorders. His research found that approximately 67% of the female killers that he examined indeed had this disorder as opposed to 25% of the male killers.

Women killers also differ from male killers in the identity of the victim. Yarvis states that to women this is a personal act, aimed at a loved one. Seventy-five percent of the victims killed by women were relatives or lovers, 17% were neighbors or acquaintances, and only 8% were strangers. The percentages of victims of male killers were 39%, 25% and 36% accordingly. Similar findings were reported by Rasko (1976) and Totman (1971).

In a very general statement I would say that men kill people they hate, and women kill people they love.

The following chapter brings the tales of four women. Apart from the fact that they are all serving life-sentences at the Neve-Tirza Prison for Women, they have almost nothing in common. Their personalities are as different as their stories. Smadar, a young girl, killed her boyfriend during a lovers' quarrel. Yael, a known criminal, killed a woman over a lesbian love-affair. Aliza, a new immigrant, killed her

father-in-law over a family quarrel. Nadya, a young Arab woman, killed an elderly Jewish man for no apparent reason.

Their stories could have all fit into other chapters of this book, but were collected here with a most interesting question in mind: Do women decide differently than men?

Smadar Avrahami

I was different from all the other girls in my class - my language was rougher, I climbed trees and acted like a boy. I was a real tomboy. I wasn't a good student either, because I had no patience to study. I would play truant from school, stay at home and listen to rock music. This kind of behavior started at a very early age. I even hated kindergarten. Nevertheless, my relationship with my parents and two brothers was fine.

There was no violence in me, whether toward animals or toward other children. I had fistfights at school only when I had to.

When I was fifteen or sixteen I started to have eating problems and was hospitalized in a mental hospital for short periods. I would eat and then vomit. The hospital diagnosed my mental problems as Borderline Personality Disorders, one symptom of which is Anorexia Bulimia and self-destruction. One of the conditions of my release from the hospital was that I stay far from home. My parents were very liberal, and the doctor disapproved of this. There were no guidelines at home. There was no curfew. I occasionally drank beer, but didn't use drugs.

There were uncontrollable angry outbursts against objects. I broke, destroyed, burned and cut myself. I put out cigarettes on my body, cut my wrists and so on. This was all a cry for help and attention. I was a girl who wanted to be listened to, loved and taken care for.

I went to lots of counseling sessions. I met with dozens of psychologists, psychiatrists and criminologists. The counselors I had before my hospitalization were not strong enough to control me or to get to the root of my problems. I was more controlled and decisive at the hospital. I saw things differently. The only treatment I got were talks, no drugs, no electric shocks, nothing. It is really annoying to meet with these counselors, because you get sick and tired of trying to explain again and again who and what you are. I would start therapy and then stop. I remember one psychiatrist asking me stupid questions, like what day it was, or whether I could tell the time. I just got up and left. It was ridiculous.

After the ninth grade I was in the hospital. The psychiatrists looked for me to stay somewhere, as long as it wasn't home. I really wanted to go to a kibbutz. It fit my personality. The kibbutz youth seemed just right, the open atmosphere, life in nature. But, I was told that I wasn't suitable because of my poor school record. They looked for a boarding school and found "Broshim" I was released from the hospital on the condition that I go to "Broshim." I ran away the same day I got there. I wanted to be at home and my parents wanted it, too. I didn't want my parents returning me to the school or to the hospital, so I ran away from home and wandered the streets for a few days. I stayed with friends in Bat-Yam, one of whom was a friend of a girl who was in the hospital with me.

I returned home a few days later, was accepted at a school, but ran away again. There was one school I really wanted to go to, but my parents had heard

that the kids there used drugs, so they didn't like the idea. I went for an interview on my own, was accepted and managed to convince my mother that it was a good place for me.

I went to this school for three months, then quit. I wanted to sleep in the mornings. All I wanted to do was stay at home, watch movies, and mainly eat and vomit. The greater pleasure came from eating, but I enjoyed the vomiting, too.

I went to school regularly until the ninth grade, and from the age of sixteen I stopped studying altogether. Most of my time up to the age of twenty-one was spent in the hospital.

I met Gidi during one of my leaves from the hospital. A friend of mine introduced us. The four of us - my friend and her boyfriend, Gidi and I - went out together. We went to a pub, had a few drinks and a good time, and then each of us returned to their own home. I wanted a male soul-mate, not a sexual partner. I thought that a sexual partner was very confining.

I liked Gidi a lot. It started out quite normally. At first, I didn't get carried away. Gradually, I fell in love with him. I loved his personality and his warmth toward me. Although I loved him and he loved me, I continued with my vomiting and my self-inflicted injuries.

At some stage, our relationship got worse. We broke up over something stupid, but made up the next day. There were many separations between us. Every time we separated, I loved him more. He felt the same toward me. After about a year and a half, he was spending more time with his friends than with me, so I got angry and broke up with him.

When our love was still strong, he thought that I had been unfaithful to him with his friend's brother. Actually, I was never unfaithful to him. He came over from the university and acted strangely. He wanted to have sex, but I had my period and refused. We went to all sorts of places in the car. When we arrived at the Hula Nature Reserve, he asked me whether I wanted to drive. When I said that I did, and got out of the car, he drove off and left me there in the pouring rain at eight o'clock at night.

I was stunned. How could he be so mean? I walked to the main road, and hitched a ride home.

Later on, he called me and tried to find out if I had really slept with his friend's brother. When he discovered that I hadn't, he came back to me. I went on loving him despite what he had done to me. Once we had a fight and he said that he would cut my face. I said to him, "If you really want to cut me, please do." I brought a knife, held it over my hand and began cutting myself. He started crying and took the knife away from me.

Once, I jumped out of the car while he was driving. We were having a fight, and he asked, "Do you want me to do what I did to you at the Hula Reserve?" I opened the car door and jumped out.

At that time Gidi was studying for his master's degree and I was twenty-three. I had never thought of killing him, at any stage, despite the things he

did to me. These episodes really hurt me. We fought, he would apologize, we would make up, and immediately argue again, and fight and so on.

During one of our arguments, he slapped me. This really hurt me. I spit in his face, and thought to myself, "If he slaps me once more, I'll be all over him. He will have to learn that nobody hits Smadar." I thought of throwing all the things in the house at him, even valuables. I thought of hurting him with anything available.

Nevertheless, I couldn't leave him. He had hit me before that incident and he hit me after it. The next time he hit me, I slapped him back and scratched his face. My reaction scared him. We separated, and he told me angrily, "If I see you in any of my usual places, I will beat the shit out of you in front of everyone."

I was scared of Gidi. I knew that he was capable of hitting me in front of others. At that time, my father wanted me to go to a technical college. I was afraid of running into Gidi in town, so I started carrying a kitchen knife around in my schoolbag. I thought that if he saw me and approached me, I would take out the knife and frighten him so badly, that he wouldn't even dare to phone me.

Despite all this, he came to my house, we went for a walk, talked and got back together. All this time, the knife was hidden in my sock, and he didn't know about it. He was a very fickle person and I was afraid that he would beat me up in front of all our friends. This, to me, would be the worst humiliation.

A few days later, in spite of the love I still felt for him, I came to my senses and decided that the situation was going nowhere. When we met, I explained that I didn't like the relationship, and that I was breaking up with him.

I still kept the knife. After all these separations, I decided not to go back to him, but I wasn't sure in what state I would find him.

One day, he showed up at my house and asked for some stuff he had left behind. I told him to return my things first, and then I would give him his. He promised to come back with my things, so I gave him everything except for one valuable book, which I kept as a deposit. I asked him to go get the things I had at his house. He went and came back with some of my things, except one painting that I really liked. He told me that a friend of his had it, and added, "If you want your painting, call my friend."

I answered, "If you want your book, call my girlfriends."

"Smadar," he answered, "you know very well that I can take the book by force."

Between his first and second visits, I had picked up the knife. I held it behind my back, and leaned against the wall. He didn't see the knife.

"Don't even try!" I warned him.

He came up to me and slapped my face. I pushed him toward the door, waved the knife and shouted, "Get out!"

He looked at me, sneered and said, "Come on, are you going to stab me?" The tone of his voice suggested that I was weak and was just out to make a scene. When he came up close to me, I stabbed him.

Yael Abergil

My parents were formally divorced when I was five years old, but they were separated before that. I stayed with my mother in Kiryat-Gat. All my older brothers and sisters were placed in kibbutzim. Mother was a cook in a fancy restaurant in Beer-Sheva and came home very late. I was always home alone after I came back from school.

At the age of ten I started to steal and smoke cigarettes. The process is very simple. You run away from school, buy cigarettes and smoke them. In order to finance the cigarettes and other stuff, you steal money or people's wallets at the grocery store or the market.

At the age of eleven I was sent to reform school. That was scary. All the girls were older than me, with tattoos, modern hairstyles and makeup and smoked hashish.

A teacher and a social-worker at the school took special care of me. The social-worker took me to her home, where I stayed for a few months. When I became fed up, I ran away again, stole and smoked hashish. I wandered the streets and slept in buses or with relatives.

The police picked me up. The probation officer told the judge that I had no home, so he decided to send me to reform school. After a few months there, I ran away again, and then the judge sent me to a foster family in a village near Hadera.

A short while before I came to the foster family, I was arrested. Leaving the detention center, I met a girl who offered me a lift. I went home with her and we started an affair. I was thirteen and she was eighteen. She was in the army. Before that I had had no sexual relationships with anyone, neither boys nor girls. My first time was with her. It was fun. I felt very good about it. I felt very good with her, in general.

I continued seeing her, when I lived with the foster family, and later moved in with her at her parents' house until I was fifteen-and-a-half. They knew that their daughter was a lesbian and were aware of our relationship.

Both of my parents died within four months of each other when I was fifteen-and-a-half. I went to the welfare authorities to request housing assistance, but the social worker would not help me. I closed the door and beat her up. She was injured in the head, so the judge sent me to Neve-Tirza Prison for Women for ten months.

During my time in prison, I was crazy. I cut my wrists and fought with the inmates and the guards. I was very bitter. A bitter person acts stupidly. So, I didn't get a third off for good behavior. When I was released, I spent a month doing nothing. I visited ex-prisoners, especially those whom I had had affairs with in prison. When I had arrived in prison, the other inmates welcomed me. I was small and looked like a boy. They liked me especially because I openly declared that I

was a lesbian. The other women spoiled me, and I had had lots of short affairs in prison.

After about a month, I went back to see the same social-worker whom I had beat up. She again refused to help me, so I hit her again. I was arrested on the spot, and was sentenced to two and a half years. My behavior in prison didn't change, so this time I was also denied a third off for good behavior. I didn't mind going to prison. I even wanted to go back. Instead of wandering the streets, I preferred prison, which was warm, and the place where I had friends.

I was eighteen years old when I was released, and lived with a woman for half a year. She was married, so the affair had to remain secret. She rented an apartment for me and financed me. In prison I had met her niece, who recommended that I meet her aunt when I got out. She had no idea that we would have a relationship. She knew that I was lesbian, but didn't know that her aunt had the same tendencies. During the six months that we spent together, she returned to her husband every night.

One day, I went to Kikar-Atarim with a friend. On the way there, he snatched a woman's purse. I was not aware of his intentions, but during the struggle I helped him out. The police picked up both of us. They charged me as an accessory to robbery, and I waited in jail six months for the trial. At the trial, my friend testified that I had had nothing to do with the crime, so I was released.

Meanwhile, my relationship with the woman ended, because her husband had found out about it. I stayed with friends and wandered the streets.

I went to a lesbian club regularly. There, I met a woman whom I knew from prison. She had very rich parents. She looked very masculine, and in prison we had fought over a girl. I had a girlfriend and she tried to look at her.

Even outside prison she told other girls that if I had a girlfriend, she would look at her and try to take her away from me.

When I was told about this, I looked for her for a month in order to fight with her and beat her up. We met by chance at a bus stop. We started talking, and she said that she knew I was looking for her. She was in a hurry, but I didn't let go. She wanted to have a cup of coffee and talk, but I refused, so we went to the construction site of a big hotel.

We immediately started arguing and fighting. She called me a bitch and cursed my parents. I was very sensitive about my parents. To this day, I am very sensitive about anything to do with my parents. I would not let anyone insult them. In prison, no one ever said anything about them. If anyone had said anything, I would have beat on her. The insults against my parents drove me mad. I was crazy and wanted to kill her. When I was looking for her, I had no idea it would end like this. I thought we would fight, and that would be it.

When she cursed my parents, it caused momentary insanity, which made me decide to kill her. There was a big concrete block right next to me. I picked it up and hit her over the head with it. I hit her twice, but she was killed instantly. I threw her down the empty emergency-staircase shaft and left. I calmed down only after I had thrown her down there.

Aliza Miloshevitz

I met my husband at the Technical College in Zagreb, Yugoslavia. We were among the only Jews there.

Our relationship was more or less all right, and a year and a half after our marriage, I gave birth to a baby girl. Before we were married, my parents, who were still quite well-to-do after the war, bought me an apartment. After the wedding, his parents demanded that they buy us a larger apartment, and also asked for money in exchange for their agreement to the marriage. My parents naturally objected, and explained that our marriage was a love-match, not a business deal.

When I got married, I was very young and unaware that his parents wanted money from mine. But within a short time, our parents had a fight. This depressed me so much, that my parents suggested that I go for psychiatric help. I spoke to the psychiatrist, who claimed that I was not in need of medication, and that my problems would be solved as soon as the family quarrel was resolved.

This went on for a few years, during which time I considered divorce, but decided to remain married because of the child and because divorce in Yugoslavia is not acceptable. A divorced woman is considered almost a whore.

I think my husband married me out of love, but his parents poisoned his mind. He was a weak man and easily influenced by whoever put more pressure on him. Although he was thirty years old when we married, he still behaved like a child.

After a while, things got better between the families, and then the civil war broke out in Yugoslavia. Before the war, I had had thoughts of emigrating to Israel or the United States, but when the fighting started, I was really obsessed with leaving the country. Before the war, my parents did not want me to leave the country with my husband, because they could not trust him to support me. He was like a child. I had a seven-year-old daughter and a thirty-seven-year-old son.

After the war broke out, my parents realized how dangerous it was to stay. After my mother was killed by a bomb that landed where she worked, my father was finally convinced that we leave the country and go to Israel.

My mother had left me an inheritance and my father also added all he had, which was a considerable sum. He wanted us to succeed, and knew that my husband could not be trusted.

My in-laws wanted to emigrate with us. My husband pressured me, and I agreed, because it was very dangerous to stay there. All the Jews wanted to go to Israel. When my husband's parents heard that my father had given me all of our family possessions, they felt that their old plot was finally going to succeed. They organized all the documents to show that we were one big family.

When we received the documents from the Yugoslav Ministry of the Interior, they said that everything - stamp collections, ancient coins, expensive and ancient glassware and kitchen utensils - was in my father-in-law's name, as head of the

family. I didn't expect trouble in the future, and wanted to get away from the fighting zone as quickly as possible.

Thank God, we safely landed at the Ben-Gurion Airport in Israel. We found an apartment in Pardes-Hana, and as we didn't have enough money, we all lived in the same apartment. My husband and I had one room, the old people (seventy-eight and eighty years old) had the second room, and my daughter had the third one.

As soon as we moved in, my in-laws told me that they would not return all my property and that they intended to use that money to buy themselves an apartment. Living together was very difficult. We argued all the time. It was not just the money that I was afraid of losing. These possessions were things that I had grown up with and they had been passed down in my mother's family for generations.

My husband's parents not only wanted to use my money to buy themselves an apartment, but also wanted to help their own relatives. I was regarded as a stranger in this family. I had no other relatives in Israel, and felt that they were taking advantage of me.

The Jewish Agency gave us three hundred Israeli Shekels (\$100) a month for rent, but the rent was five times that sum. My husband went to school to study Hebrew, and I took any possible job - I picked oranges, helped out in a bakery, and cleaned house.

During the Gulf War, I had a job in a greenhouse from six-thirty in the morning till three-thirty in the afternoon. Then I stayed on for a second shift until ten o'clock at night preparing flower bouquets for export. I kept all the money I made for my daughter and myself. I gave my husband's parents nothing, and they were very angry.

I worked like this for two months. I was pleased because I had a lot of overtime, but when I got home it was hell. They cursed me, accused me of not looking after my daughter, and called me a whore. They knew that I had had psychiatric treatment, and mocked me about it.

There was physical violence a few times a week, like some sort of competition as to who was stronger. The neighbors would come in and break it up. The old man once hurt me seriously. He pushed me, and I fell and broke my arm. I couldn't work for two weeks. There was no money and the situation was very tense. They threatened to kill me. This went on for a number of months, from the winter to the summer of 1991.

One day, I couldn't find work, and was very nervous. The rent, food, and my daughter's school were all my responsibility. But there wasn't work every day. One day, I had to stay home. This was not good because as I said, our three-room apartment, was very close quarters. So occasionally, my in-laws vented their anger and frustration on my daughter.

That day, the old people left in the morning and came home at lunchtime. They were eating in the kitchen when my daughter went in there to get a glass of water. They shouted at her. She was not supposed to enter the kitchen when they

were eating. She hated them, too, because they used to spit at her, and never spoiled her, although she was their only grandchild. They shouted at her - an eleven-year-old - and she answered back. I heard the shouting from my room, ran into the kitchen, and a fight started. They complained that my daughter had disturbed them.

My father-in-law was a very violent man. He beat his wife throughout their married life. There was a short shouting match, and then it moved on to hitting. I pushed my daughter out of the kitchen and fought with the two of them. When they were alone, they fought amongst themselves, but were united against me. Although he was eighty years old, he was a very strong man. He had been a soldier for many years before becoming a factory worker.

During the struggle, he tore my dress and I was naked. I took a stick that happened to be in the kitchen and hit him over the head and shoulders. He fell to the floor and while he was still shouting at me, the police knocked at the door. Since I was naked, I rushed to my room to get dressed. The policemen took me to the police-station, where I was told that he had died as a result of the blows that I had given him.

Nadia Jamal

(Nadia Jamal's story is a combination of a long letter she wrote to the Supreme Court and an interview with her in prison. More than in other stories, I tried to preserve the original language, and did not make significant alterations.)

I opened my eyes to a father and mother on bad terms. Father was a bad and violent man. Blows were the only way and language he used to raise us. I never knew joy or a happy childhood with the warmth of parents. My brothers and I lived in fear and tears. We would wake up at night scared and frightened, from our parents screams when they quarreled. I would hide my head under the pillow, so as not to hear my father's steps, when he came to wake me up with blows.

I knew life only from its cruel and dark side. I went to school every day after the curses I heard from my father, and lost all hope for happiness. When I saw my school friends happy and laughing, I would cry inside and be sorry, and it hurt that I couldn't be happy like them and that there was nothing to be happy about.

I grew older, and so did my brothers, who became aggressive, and I realized that Father's attitude and education made them cruel. My brothers quarreled a lot, and home became an embroiled and complicated place. I decided to change myself and my bitter fate, and looked for a way to get out.

When I was fifteen, I met Nuri, a twenty-year-old, who later became my husband. I saw him as the only person I could trust, and who could save me from the situation at home and from depression. We were in contact for three years until we decided to get married, not because I wanted to marry, but because it was the only way out of home.

My parents did not agree to my relationship with Nuri or to our wedding. They obstinately refused, punished me and beat me so that I would leave him, but nothing helped them. I finally married without their consent, and realized my one dream to get away from them. It was done without thinking whether it was a right move or not. I didn't even think about a home like any woman. We got married and lived with my husband's parents. I turned a new leaf in my life, and thought that it was the end of my suffering.

Unfortunately, I was disappointed again, and the events at my husband's home began like in a movie. Two months later, my husband quit his job, and was drawn into crime and drugs. I made every effort and fought to get him away from drugs, but without success. We quarreled every day, and our economic situation was very bad.

Two months after I gave birth to my first child, my husband was sentenced to two years in prison for drug-related crimes. He left me to the constant fights, suffering and cruelty in his parents' home, and with my parents, on the other hand, who were opposed to my marriage, and took me and the child back to their home by force.

At that time, my father left home and never even came to visit. To this day I know nothing about him. My brothers inherited his behavior and cruelty. I was alone in the family with a child. I would get beaten, for no reason, and with no one to comfort me. I really despaired, and tried to commit suicide. I swallowed fifty sleeping pills, and woke up a few days later in the hospital. I spoke to the social worker in Tira, my village, and to the hospital psychiatrist, and begged them to find me some place to stay, even a shelter. I wanted nothing from the world. I just wanted to be alone, without nightmares or pressure in my head. Actually, from then on I always feel pressure inside me, and I am dying to be free of my thoughts and depression. I want to be alone, cut off from the world. But nothing helped. They promised to find me a place, but it was all talk. And that is how life went on, with depression, tears and suffering.

When my husband was released from prison, I preferred life with the pain of a drug-addict to the constant beatings of my brothers. We rented an apartment in Tira, and I hoped that my husband would mend his ways and go back to being a good man, but the situation only got worse. My husband's condition deteriorated. We put him into a drug-withdrawal center, from which he would escape through the window at night to buy drugs, and then return, and they finally kicked him out. We had no income. All the social-security money was spent on drugs.

Even on the holidays, when everyone was happy, I sat at home and cried. There was hardly enough food for the child. Then I got pregnant again, against my will, and the depression and pressure increased. We had fights and blows every day. I tried to miscarry, but I ended up giving birth to a daughter. Instead of being a happy wife and mother, I thought about the baby's fate, and how I would feed her and the boy. My husband even stole the government birth-grant money to buy drugs. He sold every thing we had in the house, except the bedroom, to get money for drugs. I had nothing.

Despite all the suffering and efforts, I couldn't get my husband to kick the habit. One day he brought drugs home. Without a second thought, I sat down next to him and said, "Listen, if you don't stop it, I will be an addict too!" I took the filter from his hand and dragged on it a bit. I thought it would hurt him and get him to stop, but it didn't help.

I did it again the next day, and said to myself, "Maybe there is some pity left in him, and he will think about what will happen." But, there was no chance that he would change, and I was already drawn to drugs.

At this stage, I stopped caring about myself. I wanted to die fast. I tried to kill myself again and again. The psychiatrist and the social worker decided to put me in a mental hospital, but my brothers were against it, and I was too weak and afraid to oppose them, because I knew what my punishment would be.

My husband went to jail again for three years, and left me addicted to drugs. I went to the social worker for help. I begged her. I cried like a baby. I wanted to kick the habit, take the children, and live with them in peace. The social worker tried to help the children, but could not go against the wish of my brother, who tried to kill me.

I managed to kick the drug habit on my own, but the situation was the same. I didn't know what to do. I was lost and without hope, until one day, and I don't know how, my legs took me to run away from home, without planning or thought. My head was stuffed, and I stopped functioning like a whole person. I left the house without knowing where I was going. I asked God to take me to rest. I wanted to die. I was desperate.

I knew a girl, who lived in the Hatikva neighborhood in southern Tel-Aviv. There was no one to help me, so without too much thought, I went to her house. I sat with her parents and told them that I was having a rough time, so they let me stay with them.

At the time, I had a good friend in the village, Munir, who knew my story. I called him, told him that I had left home and where I was staying. He arrived immediately, tried to help me in any way and stood by me. He tried to convince me to return to my parents, but when he saw that there was no chance of that, he rented an apartment, and we lived there together.

I wanted to see my children, but didn't know how. Whenever I called, my brothers threatened to kill me. I lived in fear, became depressed again, and lost all hope of ever seeing my children again. As a result of my bad mental condition, I got involved in drugs again.

My friend, Munir, also suffered because of me, but still did his best to help me. He managed to bring me my daughter, who was a year and a half old, but the boy stayed in the village.

I loved Munir endlessly, and he loved me, but we quarreled about the drugs. He tried to get me to kick the habit, and I would occasionally stop for a while, but the depression and the thoughts made me go back to it again and again.

During our quarrels, Munir occasionally hit me. It was for my own good, because of the drugs, but once when he beat me, the neighbors heard my screams and called the police. When the police arrived, my hand was hurt and they took me to the hospital.

I told the hospital social worker my whole story, asked her to help me, and begged her to get me into a battered-women's shelter, or even jail, to help me kick the habit. She sent me to the welfare authorities in the Tel-Aviv, but when I got there, after all my pain, they told me that I didn't belong to them, and that I had better go to the welfare in Tira.

It drove me mad. After I had some hope that my troubles would finally be over, I was disappointed again. I was ashamed to go back to Munir, so I called my family in Tira.

I said to myself: "Whatever will be, will be. Let them kill me. I am sick of life anyway."

I told them that I was coming back, and my brother promised not to hurt me. I arrived home, and it was as if I had walked myself to hell. I was beaten almost to death. My brother tied me up with iron, and took me in his car to an abandoned spot among the olive groves. I looked death in the eye. I begged him to release me, to have pity on me and my children, but he wouldn't listen.

Suddenly, just as he was about to shoot me, a police car passed by. When he saw it, he pulled me into his car and escaped. On the way he said to me, "You were lucky, but there is a grave waiting just for you."

He took me back to the house, tied me with iron and locked me in a room for over a month. He came every day to beat me up. I was near madness. I stopped functioning. I lived in fear and shock, and sat in the corner of the room shaking all day.

One day, my mother came to see me, and I begged her to release me. My entire body was swollen from the beating. I asked to take a shower. My brother came, untied me, and I went into the shower. I took the opportunity, and escaped through the bathroom window.

It was a crazy decision, without second thought. All I could think of was how to get somewhere peaceful. How to get into a shelter or jail. I wanted to rest. I was looking for a corner to crawl into and hide all my life, to get away from the world and the cruelty of fate.

I went to Tel-Aviv, but I had nowhere to go. I slept like a dog in the elevator of a newly constructed building in the cold and rain. I met someone who was staying in an abandoned room in the new central bus-terminal, which was then being built. There was nothing personal between us, but I thought he might help me. When I got there, I couldn't find him, but I found his friend, a shy, quiet boy, and I asked him to let me stay there for a few days.

I was constantly depressed and all sorts of thoughts went through my mind. I couldn't understand how I came to be living with people I didn't even know. I kept thinking how to find myself a permanent place, and couldn't think of anywhere better than prison, which was the only place where I could have my own peaceful corner, without pressure or fear of my brothers. After a few nights at the bus-terminal, I felt lost and called my friend, Munir. He tried to convince me to return to Tira, and told me that he wanted to talk to my brother and patch things up between us. I told him that it was impossible, because I was scared to even hear my brother's name. But, Munir wanted to help me, and began convincing me that he would be responsible for me, and that no one would be allowed to raise their hand to me or harm me. He talked so much trying to convince me that he wanted my own good, and he cried like a baby on the telephone, so I felt sorry for him and told him that I agreed because I had no choice. He told me that he was going immediately after our conversation to see my brother, and we agreed that he would pick me up at six o'clock from a certain bus-stop back to Tira.

I tried to talk myself into going back, but because of my fear of my brother, I couldn't face him, and I didn't wait for Munir as we had arranged. I called Munir at his house in Tira the next morning. He shouted at me that he was not playing games, and that I was playing with him. "After I went to your brother, and convinced him, and told him about your condition, and we came together to pick you up, you weren't there." He raved and cried with pain on the telephone, and said to me, "That's it. After this, I never want to see you again. Forget all about me!"

I walked around stunned and desperate. I looked for revenge from myself. I hated myself and wanted to die at that moment, after I had lost the person I cared most about in the entire world, and the pain for what I had done to him. I thought of nothing else, except how to punish myself and get into prison somehow.

I walked in the direction of the house, where Munir and I had lived. I saw the landlord in the house, and rang the bell. He opened the door, greeted me and invited me in for something to drink. I went in with no bad intentions.

We drank tea, and he said, "I made some soup, and it is still hot. Would you like to have some with me?" "No, thank you," I answered, "I ate before I came." He went into the kitchen, prepared two bowls of soup, and brought them out. I didn't want any. I had no appetite at all. He ate his soup, and was talking and laughing. He was happy.

He put on the TV, sat down and ate my soup, talking and laughing about the new tenant, who was fat, and other things. Suddenly, he started coughing badly. Something from the soup got stuck in his throat. I brought him water, but he couldn't stop coughing, and then he suddenly went quiet. I looked at him, called his name twice, but he didn't answer. I grabbed his hand to see if he had a pulse. He didn't. I was scared. I stepped back and was quiet. I didn't know what to do. Suddenly, I don't know how, and without feeling, the thought that I could get to jail, crossed my mind. In his living-room, on the shelf, there were statues and big bottles. Without any feeling, I picked up one statue, and hit him over the head two or three times. He didn't move at all. After I did that, and saw the blood pouring from his head, I really got scared and crazy.

Without feeling, I took the statue and walked out of the house. I threw the statue and the house keys in a dump nearby, and walked like a crazy person back to the room at the bus terminal.

Self Control and Emotionality

Economic theory states that a person's position improves, when more possibilities are open to him, and that his position is worse, when his choices are limited. Psychological theories of decision-making state, on the other hand, that many alternatives to choose from harm, rather than benefit, one.

For instance, a football fan is watching a fascinating game between Dallas and San Francisco. His friend calls up to tell him that the game between Kansas City and Buffalo is being broadcast on a different channel. Is our fan's position better or worse? Seemingly better, because he can now choose between two alternatives. Psychological decision-making theories claim that he is worse off. Although he can continue watching the first game, now, while watching it, he knows that he is missing the other game. His point of reference has changed.

Before the phone call, he enjoyed the game relatively to not watching TV at all. Now, he is comparing his pleasure from the first game to his pleasure from the other game, and the difference is much smaller than the previous difference.

What will actually happen is that he will watch the second game for a while, then switch to the first, when he will discover that he missed a touch down. He will then stay with the first game until the intermission, then switch back to the second game, when he will discover that he missed two touch downs.

Additional information and more possibilities of choice do not necessarily improve our feeling. Therefore, at times, we tend to limit our freedom of choice and block off information in order to achieve self-control.

Thaler (1980) explains the phenomena of self-control and precommitment. He models the individual as an organization with a planner and a series of doers. The planner is balanced, stable, cool and consistent. The doers are selfish and myopic. The planner makes the rules which will prevent the doer from acting against its long-term preferences. The planner is concerned with lifetime utility while the doer exists only in the present. The planner is the one that tells the employer to deduct a regular monthly sum from the salary and invest it in a savings account, so that the doer does not spend all the money. The planner removes the box of chocolates, so that the doer can keep to his diet.

The classic example of self-control achieved by blocking alternatives and information is that of Ulysses. He instructed his sailors to tie him to the mast and to put wax in his ears, to keep him from hearing the Sirens' seductive singing and prevent the drowning of his ship.

"I know myself. I know I have a hot temper. That's why I hid the weapon in the orchard, not to use it in a moment of anger. I get angry quickly, and I knew that if anyone upset me, I might shoot him. I was afraid of myself."

These are the words of Rahamim Zefania, a short while before he killed his girlfriend.

The following story is an example of lack of control, of emotions overcoming considered thought. Despite his life sentence, and despite the fact that he is now in jail and not emotionally distressed, Zefania concludes his story with the following statement, "I do not rule out the possibility, that if I am hurt again like I was at the time, I might repeat what I did. It really scares me."

Rationality admits defeat to emotionality.

Rahamim Zfania

One day, I was playing cards at home with my friends. My wife asked me if she could visit her sister, and promised to be back by midnight. It was close to two o'clock in the morning, when she got back. She got undressed quietly, taking care not to wake me, but I was awake. She took the clothes that she had taken off, and hid them in the other room. The next morning, I saw that her clothes were hidden. There were bits of cut grass on them, and they smelled funny. I asked her, "Where were you? I promise not to do anything to you."

She told me a story that she had been unfaithful to me with a taxi driver. At this point we started to argue. She asked me for a divorce, but I refused. She put all sorts of pressure on me. She sent people to persuade me, and once her brother beat me up. A friend of hers once threatened me with a weapon. One day she showed up with her brother, who was a soldier, and he tried to persuade me to give her a divorce. He kicked me in the face, the head, and my whole body. When he left, I was all beaten up. I took a kitchen knife, and tried to chase him and kill him. I couldn't find him anywhere in town, so I went back home. I looked at myself in the mirror, and it scared me. I was all blue and swollen. I didn't leave home for two weeks.

I decided to neutralize the legs that had kicked me. I filed a complaint with the police, but they didn't deal with it properly. In this state, after I had been hurt in various ways, I decided to get a weapon, and I did.

We finally got a divorce, and I met another girl, Jacqueline. She was dating someone from our neighborhood. It was customary that if a girl was dating anyone else, you would not try anything with her. This girl knew my brother, and once, when I was sitting in a restaurant, she asked me if I was his brother. She was with her boyfriend. A very pretty girl. I asked the proprietor who she was. About two months later, she came to the restaurant alone. She greeted me and asked, "Can I join you at your table?" I agreed, of course, and we started talking. We parted two hours later. She knew that I was usually at this restaurant at certain hours, and always showed up then. My friend, the proprietor, said to me, "She is on bad terms with her boyfriend, and I think she is interested in you."

At that time, I had a girlfriend. I was very interested in Jacqueline, but I didn't want anything to do with her, if she was still seeing someone else.

We met at the restaurant almost every evening for two months. I realized that she was really not on good terms with her boyfriend. She wanted us to go out together, but I refused as long as she was with him. He wasn't a good friend of mine, but we knew each other. She told me that someone was following us for her boyfriend.

I found out that she was looking for a place to live. She told me that she was going to move in with someone I knew, and expected me to ask her to live with me. I didn't ask her, and she moved in with that man. One day, she showed up at the

restaurant, and told me that she didn't want to stay with him. The next day, she came to the restaurant again to talk to me, but I wasn't there, so she got drunk. That is how she ended up at my place at two o'clock in the morning.

When she woke up in the morning, she didn't remember a thing. She asked if she could stay, but surprised me when she said that there would be nothing between us, apart from living in the same house. I loved her very much and was attracted to her. They say that patience wins, so I waited for her to change her mind. I agreed for us to have separate rooms.

On the first evening she wore very provocative underwear, and we chatted until three in the morning, but I didn't make a move toward her, and she didn't make a move toward me. We fell asleep in the same bed, but I didn't touch her. This went on for a month. After a month, we started to make love. We lived together for two years. She informed me that no woman was to enter the house that I was hers alone. After two years living together, her mother asked me to tell her to return home, because their neighbors and relatives said that it wasn't nice for her to live with me.

She went back to live with her parents, who were frequently out of the country. I visited her there and she visited me at home. When her father was home, I didn't go to see her, because he didn't like me. He had been told that I associated with criminals and that I smoked hashish.

I smoked hashish with her, because she couldn't have sex without drugs. She used to drink, and wanted to try hard drugs. While we were living together, she told me that her brother had sex with her.

One day, I went to see her at home, and saw there someone I knew having a cup of coffee. She was in the kitchen, and her mother was in the living room. I suspected something was going on, so I said to him, "Let's go down and talk." We went downstairs, and I asked him, "What do you want from her?" In response to my aggression, he said, "I have two cars. If you want - burn them." I answered, "If I am going to burn anything it will be you."

That man was very inferior to me. I don't usually renounce people, but he was a delinquent, had been in jail, used drugs, and was a criminal. I was hurt that she had slept with him, and I was afraid he would make a prostitute of her. I knew he had already put her on to hard drugs. I had seen the needle marks on her arm.

I felt that I had lost everything that there was nothing left to lose. I would have minded less, if she had chosen someone better than me, but it bothered me that she chose a lowly criminal like him.

"I did everything for her," ran through my head. I didn't get seriously involved with drugs, but because of her, I had to get hold of drugs, so she would have them. I loved her very much, but more than that, I didn't want to leave her so that she could go on seeing that guy. On the one hand, I knew she would go downgrade, and on the other hand I thought what people would say, "This is the girl, who used to go out with Zfania, look whom she preferred." That is very hurtful. For a moment I thought of making her ugly with acid. But I knew that I would regret turning something so beautiful into something ugly.

I went home like a crazy person, and a week later, I started wandering around town with my weapon. I'm sure that if I had bumped into the criminal she was going out with, I would have killed him.

I know myself. I know I have a hot temper. That's why I hid the weapon in the orchard, not to use it in a moment of anger. I get angry quickly, and I knew that if anyone upset me, I might shoot him. I was afraid of myself.

Jacqueline tried to deny the fact that there was willingly something going on between them. She claimed that he raped her, and continued visiting me every day.

One day, I brought the weapon home to oil it. That day she surprised me at an unexpected hour, so I had to hide it behind the TV set. She didn't know that I had it. From that day on, I kept the weapon at home.

A week later, I was drunk and stoned. She was there with me and a couple of friends. I drank with the man, and when they left, an argument broke out between us. She said that she had to leave, and I resisted. We argued and argued, until I went to the TV set, pulled out the pistol and asked her, "Do you want me to shoot you? I won't go to jail for life. After I kill you, I'll shoot myself."

She taunted me, "You don't have the guts to shoot. Come on, let's see you. If you don't shoot, you're a maniac." She repeated this a number of times.

From that moment on, everything happened by itself. I didn't want to do it. You are not yourself. You are not functioning. Things happen on their own. Like a robot, you turn the switch and it does things by itself.

You can be bitter and angry at lots of people, and suddenly you have a victim, who happened to show up at the wrong time, and he gets the whole case.

A shot was fired. I was standing two yards from her. She fell, but I was sure she had not died. I approached her and talked to her, but she turned blue. I cocked the weapon again, aimed at her temple, but couldn't shoot.

Today, in jail, I think about what I did, and I cannot rule out the possibility, that if I am hurt again like I was at the time, I might repeat what I did. It really scares me.

Decisions under Pressure

Beyond a certain critical point, mental pressure, as much as social pressure or time pressure, can have a damaging influence on our judgement. When under pressure, many people find it difficult to assimilate information, and at times are unable to process the little information that they do have (Hogarth, 1980).

MacCrimmon & Wehrung (1986) define dangerous situations, as situations which combine lack of control, lack of information and lack of time. These lacks can be regarded as pressure creating situations. Janis & Mann (1977) claim that social pressure of two kinds influences decision making processes: the possible regret about the results of the decision or limitations caused by external factors.

Many homicide cases are characterized by a feeling of no control, which stems from mental pressure and lack of information. The two stories in this chapter have in them various combinations of these two factors.

Yehiel Abramovitz, a sick old man, was physically and mentally pressured by his young, strong tenant. Bernardo Miller, a Jewish immigrant from Argentina living in New-York, was in a similar situation with his violent Puerto-Rican neighbor. In both cases, the relationships which developed created continuing pressure, and eventually led to murder over seemingly insignificant matter such as the theft of a cup of coffee, or over running over a dog.

Yehiel Abramovitz

After living with a woman for fifteen years, and another two years of marriage, I divorced my wife, and went back to live with my mother. My father had died many years before.

When I was forty-eight years old, I had my first heart-attack, and another severe one at fifty. I found it difficult to walk after that. At the age of fifty, I had an open heart surgery for three bypasses, and at sixty-two an additional operation for four bypasses, and a pacemaker, very soon after my mother had died.

I lived in Tiberias in a big, old, four room house. While my mother was still alive, I rented one room to an old man and another room to a student. Each room had a separate entrance and its own bathroom.

I never rented my mother's room, nor did I ever use it myself. The sheets and towels were folded in the cupboards, just the way my mother left them. I didn't remove anything from her room, except for her clothes, which I gave away. My room and my mother's had a joint bathroom, and that was another reason for not renting her room.

One day I met a man in the grocery store, who did renovations. I asked him if he would be willing to paint my house. He came over, but said that he wouldn't be able to paint my mother's room, because the ceiling was too high, and he had back problems. He asked me why I didn't rent the room. I told him that I just didn't care to, although I needed the money.

The next day, he brought his son, an impressive man in his thirties, and they both worked in mother's room. This went on for a few days, but they never mentioned payment for their work. On the day they finished, I asked, "How much will it cost me?" He demanded two hundred dollars. That was very expensive. "I am not a rich man," I said, "I can barely make ends meet." The son offered to rent the room for a hundred and fifty dollars a month, and to pay for half of the paint-job.

I agreed for a period of one year. There were antiques and family heirlooms in my mother's room. He said that he wouldn't need the whole closet space, so I vacated half of it for him.

He moved in, and I disliked him immediately. He was not clean. He used my bathroom and my kitchen, and it bothered me. He didn't clean his room or wash his dishes.

We had our first argument within a week. I had a key to his room, because I was still using half of the closet and the things in my mother's room. One day, I saw that he had taken a dish from my mother's dinner service, in which she used to serve fruit, and was using it as an ashtray.

When I mentioned it to him, he said that friends of his had done it. Many friends came to see him.

There was a cupboard with a glass front in his room. My mother kept her beloved doll collection in it. One day, I went into his room, and saw that the dolls

were missing. I asked, "Where are the dolls?" "I don't know," he answered, "I didn't take them." The dolls were not expensive, but it caused a breach of faith between us. Whenever his friends came to visit, he used my dishes.

My anger toward him grew. Our house was seventy years old. The floors were covered with Arabic, beautifully-designed tiles, and over them a Persian carpet, which I had left in his room. He didn't clean the room, and the carpet was dirty and dusty. He used to go into the kitchen, and drink juice I had prepared for myself.

I said to him, "Sir, I have a request, vacate the room. You and I are not compatible." He agreed. This was about a month after he had moved in, but as I spent a lot of time in hospitals, the matter was postponed.

One day I came home and found a piece of hashish near the entrance. I asked him, "Are you smoking hashish in my house?" Do I need trouble with the police, after all this time? I took the hashish, crumbled it, and flushed it down the toilet in front of his eyes.

One day he asked if he could borrow a box of juice. I let him. That very day, I became ill. When I returned from the hospital, I wanted to make myself a cup of coffee, but couldn't find the coffee.

In the evening, when he came home, I told him that my coffee was missing. He said, "I don't know anything about it."

I had another tenant in the room downstairs. When I told him that my coffee was missing, he said that my tenant had brought the coffee, when they were playing cards at night. I asked him, "Why did you say you didn't take it?" I demanded that he vacate the room, and he answered rudely, "Watch your mouth. I have friends, and at the slightest signal from me, they can make you disappear."

In the evening, I talked to him, and explained that it was difficult for me to go shopping. I also reminded him about the juice he had borrowed and not returned. He didn't pay me any attention. I shouted at him, "You took the coffee, you punk, and didn't give it back. What do you think I am, a dog?" He threatened me again, that his friends would harm me.

One day, I saw him going through my mother's sheets and towels. I asked, "What are you looking for?" He said that there were mice in the house, and that he was looking for them.

My hate grew. When he moved in, he had put many of my mother's things into suitcases. He had probably found some money my mother had hidden, for safety, in different places in her room, and he kept looking. I was furious that he was poking around in my late mother's belongings.

I demanded that he get out immediately. We started shouting. I cursed him, and he slapped me. He looked like an animal.

The next morning, I went into his room. I had a pistol, from the time I was a taxi-driver. Since there were many Arabs in the area, I kept the pistol with me all the time. Every morning, I used to sit in the little park near my house, overlooking the Sea of Galilee, and the pistol, which was very small, was always with me.

That morning, I had my morning coffee, and was on my way to the park. I went into his room, and told him to leave at once. He slapped me, and pushed me very forcibly. I was thrown backwards. He was shouting and swearing all along. He was a tall, strong man. I pulled the pistol out of my pocket, and shot seven bullets at him. It was a .22 caliber pistol. Its bullets are very small, and he continued beating me even after he was hit.

I had never been that angry. Worse things had been done to me in my life, but I always avoided quarrels. I was very sensitive about my mother's memory. I was a sick, elderly man, sixty-four years old, under frequent medical attention and very anxious. I felt extremely humiliated. Mainly when he slapped me.

It should not have come to this. I should have asked for help to get him to move out of the house. I could have asked my brothers or friends. Pride kept me from doing so. Some people would rather starve, than ask for help. I never liked to ask for favors. In moments of distress, a person should ask for help from his family and his friends.

Bernardo Miller

I was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and when the situation there became politically unstable, my wife and I emigrated at the age of twenty-five to the United States. Our life together was excellent in Argentina and in the U.S. I got a job as a production worker in a plant in New Jersey, and after five years, I became an engineer. I was promoted nicely, and was pleased with my work.

My wife was a Spanish teacher in high-school. We had three children, all good children and good students. I was on very good terms with my children, especially with my eldest son.

I had not wanted to emigrate to the U.S., but my wife had insisted, and we were very happy with our decision and succeeded well in New York. Most of our friends were South Americans, and at work I had American friends, too.

In 1984 we moved to a new house in a relatively good neighborhood in Long Island. There were quite a few Jews, and also Puerto Ricans and some blacks, who were mostly successful white-collar workers. We could say that after great efforts we had achieved our life's dream - a house of our own in New York.

We had Puerto Rican neighbors, who had bought their house a month before us. After about half a year, the neighbors started having loud and wild parties on their lawn, which was not very far from our bedroom window.

When this began, I approached my neighbor and asked him not to have his parties right under our window and to be quieter. He answered me, "I will do what I like in my own yard."

This conversation was loud, and afterwards I decided to apply for a restraining order on the basis that he was causing a disturbance. I also expressed my fears that there might be narcotics at his parties.

The judge issued the restraining order, which prohibited any parties until a court hearing. I asked a court official to accompany me to the neighbor's house, to hand him the court order.

The court official came home with me, and with my wife we went next door. The neighbor was not in, so we handed the restraining order to his wife.

The wife, who was the mayor's secretary, let fly at us. She called us dirty, smelly Jews. "Morris (her husband) has not two legs to stand on, but three," she said to us, meaning that apart from both legs he also had a big tool, that he was quite a man, "and he will show you." She frightened me. I hadn't expected a woman in her position to react like that.

When I returned home, after dropping off the court official, I was shaking with fear. Morris was a thirty-five-year-old, tall, big, and athletic man.

My lawyer told me that if the parties did not stop, I should take pictures through the fence, and then submit these pictures as evidence in court. When I got home, I photographed some workers preparing tables for yet another party. They spotted me and told our neighbor.

It was a Friday. The neighbor got home at six o'clock, and came outside with his son. I heard the boy say to him, "Sergio's father was taking pictures of our yard." Sergio, my son, was friends with the neighbor's son. They were both six years old and spoke Spanish to each other.

His wife probably had not had a chance to tell him what had happened in the morning. He went into the house, and a minute later, in which he spoke with his wife, he barged outside screaming terribly. He saw me in the kitchen window, and shouted, "You will not live here." He cursed me. "I will burn your house and your car and I will kill your family."

I went outside, to maybe try and calm him down, but he grabbed a small shovel and said to me, "Now, I am going to wreck your car."

Other neighbors gathered at all the shouting, and my wife came out, too. He approached me threateningly, but some people tried to stop him. Over their shoulders, he managed to give me a few strong shoves in the chest. It was pretty painful.

One of the other neighbors, also a Puerto Rican, pushed me into my house, and then the neighbor came up to the living room shutters, and tried to get in from there. I felt like an idiot. On the one hand, I was afraid to get near the shutters, and on the other hand, I was trying to close them, and he wouldn't let me. All this time he was shouting and cursing.

I telephoned my lawyer, and told him that I had been attacked. He told me to call the police or file a complaint immediately. I called the police, and they said it had to be in writing. On my way to the car, he spotted me and started shouting again.

I drove to the police station, shaking with fear and excitement. I told them what had happened. They told me to go home, and that they would be there soon. I said, "I am not going alone. You have to come with me." They drove in front of me, and when we arrived, they went into his house and spoke to him. Half an hour later they came out and left.

In the evening, I decided to test him. I took out the garbage, when he was sitting in the yard with his father-in-law. He probably didn't see me, because he didn't react. Later our entire family drove to Manhattan to visit friends. As we were leaving, he shouted, "I am not afraid of the police or of a thousand policemen. I'll do what I please here."

Later on, I found out why he was not afraid. His cousin was an officer in the Federal Narcotics Bureau, and due to his interference, criminal cases of attempted rape, attempted running over and others, were dropped. (My lawyer found all this out only during my trial.)

At midnight, when we returned home, we heard the loud music from far off. I called the police immediately, and told them that he was still giving parties, despite the restraining order.

The desk officer said that there was no one to send, but he entered my complaint, and asked me to come over the next day to sign a statement. That is what I did on Saturday morning.

When I got home, another neighbor, the Puerto Rican who had intervened in our fight, said to me, "Why do you need all this trouble? He is a violent man, and he said that he would go all the way with you, and he will not stop his parties. It's only once a week. You should give in." He came to see me with his wife, and they pressured me not to make the noise a basis for a fight.

I was conflicted, but glad to accept their offer. I used them as a life belt, to find an honorable way out of it all, as if I was giving in to their request, and not surrendering to my violent neighbor.

I agreed to their suggestions, and they went to get him. He said to me, "I don't intend to live here for very long, and I give you my word in writing, that the parties will end before one o'clock in the morning, and I will try to make less noise."

It was an attempt on his part to pacify me. I knew it was a lie, because no one leaves a house, that they had just moved into, nor do they change their behavior that easily. But, it was convenient for me to believe him.

The next day, we went to my lawyer, and the neighbor and his wife signed a document including all the promises, he had made me.

We lived as neighbors for three years. I didn't say hello to him, and we hardly spoke a word. About three months after the quarrel, he saw me outside, and told me that I was a snitch and didn't stick to agreements. "The police came," he said, "and searched my party guests for narcotics." I said to him, "Listen, I gave you my word, and I had nothing to do with it." On the spot, I took him in my car to the police station, we went to the narcotics division, and in his presence I asked the officer, "Did I file a complaint?" He said that the source of the information was police intelligence, and confirmed that I had no part in it. I took him back home, and that was that. It was important to me to prove to him that I had no desire to bother him anymore.

He noticed that I nearly wet myself from fear, and it made him feel like a man. We took the same bus into Manhattan every morning. Whenever we were alone at the bus stop, he would spit in my direction. He didn't actually spit at me, but it hurt me very much.

We had a roof-balcony with a view to the Atlantic Ocean. Occasionally, I stood up there looking at the view, and whenever he arrived home from the grocery or anywhere else, he would not miss the opportunity to spit in my direction.

Whenever I took the garbage outside, I made sure that he was not around, in order to avoid his spitting and his remarks. He was sitting in his yard with his wife, once, when I passed by, and he said to her, "Here is the fag, taking out the garbage." He was hinting, that no real man does house work.

His remark was really humiliating, but I never replied. I ate myself up on the inside. Never in my life did I react to his insulting remarks.

Two years after we moved in, my wife and I reached the conclusion, that we had to move. We never mentioned the reason for this. I did not want to admit to my wife that I was insulted by the neighbor, and I think that she, too, did not want me to admit it or discuss it with her.

Our little boy, who was four years old, still wet his bed at a relatively late age. I used to get up very early, wake him and take him to the bathroom, before he would wet the bed. That is what I did one Sunday morning. I got up at five, carried him still asleep to the bathroom, and then took him back to bed. While I was doing that, I remembered that I had seen a notice about an open concert in the park not far from our house, and I could not remember the program. Since I didn't want to go back to bed, I decided to drive over and look at the notice. When I returned home, and was about to turn into the driveway, the neighbor's dog suddenly jumped out from between the bushes. I stopped with squealing brakes, after which there was a loud bump, when the dog hit the car. I parked the car, and when I went to have a look at the dog, I saw it walking into the neighbor's yard, and it seemed that it wasn't hurt badly.

I went inside, sat in the living room, and looked through the weekend papers. Suddenly, I heard the neighbor shouting and screaming. I went outside, and saw him standing in his yard, with a baseball bat in his hand, his wife next to him, and he was screaming in my direction, "Son of a bitch, you ran over my dog!"

He came out of his yard, carrying the bat, entered my yard, and hit me over the head with the bat. I grabbed the bat, and in the struggle, caught hold of it. When he moved back, I threw it at him, and hit him in the head with it.

My dominant feeling was, "What have I done, and what will happen now?" I felt that I had done something stupid, and now he would beat me up. As soon as I had thrown the bat at him, I was sorry and fearful of his reaction.

I ran home and got my gun. I don't remember the exact moment of taking the gun, but I remember loading it and going outside.

I had bought the gun ten years earlier, after an armed robbery in our previous neighborhood.

I ran outside with the gun. I saw him coming toward me with the baseball bat, and he charged me. I shot at him four times. He turned and began to run away, and then I shot him in the back twice more. I don't remember the shots, and I don't remember hearing them. I felt as if I were under water. It was completely quiet, and I heard nothing. He ran down the street, and I continued shooting at him and pulling the trigger, even when all the bullets were gone. I remember that I kept pulling the trigger of the empty gun, and I was scared that he would get up and come back to beat me.

I ran after him for about a hundred yards, and only then did I realize that there was no point in shooting with an empty gun. I turned around, drained, went back home, and drove to the police station.

I am aware that I took a human life, and words cannot possibly describe my deep sorrow. But, the law has determined that three conditions are necessary for murder: a) lack of immediate provocation; b) the ability to think and to understand the results of one's deeds; c) preparation.

The second condition means, that the killer is fully aware of the nature of his behavior. Whoever thinks that in a state of excitement, such as I was in, it is

possible to say that one has full awareness of his actions, does not understand what state of mind I was in during those seconds.

It was about ten seconds from the moment he hit me over the head until I shot him, after I had run home and taken the gun. That is how long it took me to change from an ordinary citizen into a murderer.

Certainty and Uncertainty

Apparently, certainty is a specific case of uncertainty. When the odds are 100% or 0% that something will happen, we say that it is certain that it will happen or not happen. When the odds are different from 100% or 0%, there is uncertainty. Uncertainty is somewhere on the continuum between the two certainties.

Although certainty is a specific case of uncertainty, there is a deep psychological difference between them. Uncertainty is the basis for fantasy, hope and fear. Certainty is the end of hope.

The difference between a chance of 99% that something will happen and a 100% chance, despite the fact that they are only 1% away, seems much bigger than the difference between 42% and 43%, which is also only 1%. The change from a 90% chance to 100% seems much more significant than the change from 30% to 40%. The weighted probability curve of Kahneman & Tversky's (1979) Prospects Theory in diagram 3 demonstrates this point.

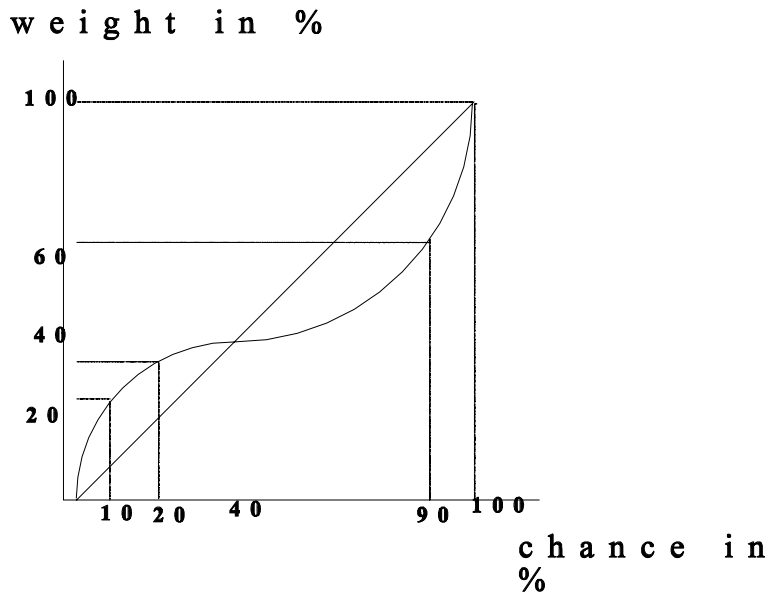


Diagram 3: The Weighted Probability Curve According to the Prospects Theory

The horizontal axis is the objective chance's axis. It expresses the real chance that something will happen, such as a prisoner being paroled by the president.

The vertical axis shows the personal, subjective values, which express a person's feelings about the objective chance. The vertical axis translates statistical estimates of hope and fear.

If the prisoner's chance of being paroled is only 10%, he might weigh it doubly, i.e., hope that his chances are 25%, as seen in the diagram.

The curve expresses the fact that hope and fear are not proportional to probability. Most people tend to exaggerate probabilities when they are low and minimize them when they are high. The curve is steep at its beginning (the possibility effect) and more so at its top (the certainty effect), where certainty is almost absolute.

From the point of view of the decision to kill, the most interesting change is between 99% and 100% - the certainty effect. It is impossible to be partially jealous, but when the wife admits to her husband that she was unfaithful, he can no longer use the defense-line of lack of knowledge. The end of Dan Lerner's story, in the Disappointment and Regret chapter, follows this description accurately.

Although researchers are divided on this topic, my impression is that most people prefer to ignore negative information and prefer ambiguity and uncertainty to certainty and all it involves.

The ending to the following story of Shimon Burstein, who killed his girlfriend, describes how his feelings swung between his wish to achieve certainty and his fear of it.

Shimon Burstein

From an early age on, I knew I would be a paratrooper. I was very keen on the army and reserve duty. I fought in the Six-Day War, the Yom Kippur War and in Lebanon. I killed people, but I don't think that the fact that I had killed, has caused any significant changes in my character. It was a necessity of war. The choice was "them or me." In combat, even when we fired at them from close range and saw the people clearly, they were not people with a clear identity and a name. You eliminate an object, not someone you know. I would not say that I was trigger-happy. I wanted the action and the suspense, before, during, and after combat.

One more thing I can say about myself is, that I was always good looking and successful with women. In the tenth grade I already screwed the teacher.

The teacher was ill one day. I took flowers and went to see her. A good student visits the teacher at home. She came out dressed in a flimsy nightgown, and asked me in for a drink. While we were chatting, she put her hand on me, and within a few moments we were in her bed. I got used to regarding women as sexual objects - screw them and dump them. I had relationships with a lot of women. After my army service I had contact with many girls and I regarded them as mattresses.

When I was twenty-four, I went to Europe for an unlimited period, and had lots of adventures. For a while I lived alone in Paris. I was a lone wolf, not friendly with people, and mainly not with Israelis. I had an apartment in a suburb of Paris, and wandered the city.

One night, near the Hilton Hotel and the Playboy Casino, I noticed a fancy car with an Arab Sheikh, a driver and a bodyguard. I followed the car to the hotel underground parking, and saw all three leave the car for the elevator to the lobby. I ran to the lobby, and saw the room number of the key that the driver picked up. I followed them for a day or two, and saw that they had a set routine. They left the hotel and returned at regular hours. I went to reception, and took a room directly one floor above the Sheikh's room. I bought a rope and gloves, and at night, after they were asleep, I slid down the rope, and looked for the suitcase in which he kept his money. I found it under the bed. I took the suitcase, and climbed the rope back up to my room.

In the morning, I left the hotel with the money, and flew to Denmark with a quarter of a million dollars. I deposited the money in a Swiss bank account and transferred some of it to Israel. I bought a van with part of the money, installed a kitchen, sleeping arrangements, a stereo and other luxuries in it, and traveled around Europe on my own.

In 1977 I returned to Israel, and lived in Tel Aviv for a while. I was friendly with Bohemians and stayed for two years. In 1979 I left for Denmark again. I rented an apartment in Copenhagen, and traveled all over the world from there. I went to Hong Kong, Columbia, Venezuela and even entered the U.S. illegally from Mexico to visit a special friend.

On one of my flights to Israel, I met a very famous actress. A super star who has won the Oscar award. We became friendly and spent her vacation together, like lovers. She invited me to visit her in Hollywood, and I promised that I would surprise her with a visit one day. When I was in Mexico, I dropped in on her in Los Angeles, and stayed at her house for a month.

I returned to Copenhagen. There is a discotheque there, where all the big drug sharks meet. I went to this discotheque frequently. I was sitting at the bar, when I heard about a big drug deal going on between the Thai and Turkish gangs. There was a very large amount of cocaine involved. I followed them for two and a half weeks. I intended to steal the money and the cocaine. I had a Remington 21 hunting rifle, with a sawed-off barrel, about 20 inches long. I could hide it under my armpit under a big French overcoat. I also had a nine-millimeter Baretta pistol with a silencer. Denmark is a cold country. It is not unusual to wear an overcoat, a hat, scarf and gloves. The gangs had arranged for the sale to take place at a certain Indian restaurant.

I parked my car in the next street, and also prepared a stolen getaway car in front of the restaurant. I went in there to eat half an hour before the Turks were supposed to arrive.

I saw them arrive with an attaché case with the cocaine. They went up to the third floor. I waited ten minutes, then went in the direction of the rest room, which was located between the second and third floors. I put on a sky mask, a scarf and gloves. I left the rest room, and went up to the third floor. I pulled out the pistol with the silencer, shot the lock of the office and went in. I had the pistol in my left hand and the rifle in my right.

They were very surprised to see me. There were three Thais and four Turks. I said to them in a very tough voice, "You motherfuckers, if anyone moves, I'll blow your heads off."

One of the Thais made a movement that seemed like Karate, so I shot him in the shoulder with the pistol. I didn't intend to kill him, just immobilize him. When he fell, they all dropped to the floor, and didn't move. There were two attaché cases on the table. The open one had the cocaine in it, and I suspected that the closed one had the money in it. I closed the case with the cocaine, pulled out the telephone cord, and tied them all up together. I took out some adhesive strips that I had ready, taped their mouths shut, and warned them, "Five minutes, anybody moves, he's gona get a bullet in his ass."

I left the room, and turned the sign over to "DO NOT DISTURB." I turned my overcoat inside out, black to white, put both guns back in their holsters, picked up a case in each hand, and left slowly without calling any attention to myself. I got into the stolen car, drove a few hundred meters, and then walked back to my own car. I drove to my apartment, from which I could see the restaurant.

That same evening, I sold the cocaine to a Yugoslav gang for the retail price of 125,000 dollars. There were 220,000 dollars more in the other case. I drove to Switzerland that night, and deposited some of the money there.

Apart from this robbery, I pulled off a few more on drug dealers in Denmark. About half a year after the restaurant job, I was picked up by the Danish police as a suspect, because another Israeli snitched on me. Some Israelis noticed that I had a lot of money, and one of them leaked it to the police. They had been following me for two months. They raided my home and found the rifle. Some of the robbed drug dealers identified the rifle, which was the weapon I used during the robberies.

I was sentenced to two years in a Danish prison, of which I served one year and four months. When I was released, the Lebanon War had just broken out, so I returned to Israel to join my unit.

One night, I was hurt by R.P.G. sparks. There were burns on my back, and I was evacuated to a field hospital. They bandaged me, and I returned to my unit the same day.

After the war, I met a seventeen-year-old girl in a hotel in Natanya. She and her girlfriend picked me up at the pool. I was thirty-five years old. She knew me because of my reputation as Shimon the fun guy, Shimon the ladies man, and Shimon the playboy. I used to show up at the pool with some bottles of beer, music and American cigarettes, and all the girls gathered around me. Everyone knew me in town.

We started going out together. She knew who I was and what I was. She was the first girl I had genuine feelings for. I loved her very much. This was the first girl I ever really loved in my life. We went out for a year and a half. Her parents, at first, did not know about us, but they found out later on, and were very opposed to our relationship. They pressured her to leave me. She quarreled with them because they tried to stop her from seeing me.

Just before she went into the army, I sat with her one evening and said to her, "Listen, you are about to join the army. I know what it's like. It is a completely different life from what you have now. You will meet a nice, young officer, and you will want to be with him. Let's break up now, and if you still want me when you come out of the army, you will know where to find me."

She agreed. Two or three weeks later, I regretted my suggestion and went into a jealous fit. She started seeing a young guy, and I was angry and very jealous. I continued sending her gift parcels, and she still came to see me on her leaves. She kept this from her parents, but came to me and we still had sex. Even my mother said to her, "Leave him, he is not for you. He is an adult and you are young. Your whole life is ahead of you." She didn't listen, and our relationship continued.

Occasionally she came to me and said, "Maybe we should separate?" and then a week later, "Maybe we should stay together?" I became emotionally dependant on her indecision. She made me exist in total uncertainty.

On one of her leaves, I was on reserve duty. I decided to come home, and end our relationship ultimately. We had to decide whether we would be completely together or totally separated.

I waited for her in front of her house from nine thirty in the evening to four in the morning. She finally arrived in a car with someone I knew. They sat for a few

minutes, and he kissed her. I saw all this, and was consumed with jealousy. My ego was very hurt. She got out of the car and the guy left.

I approached her and she came up to me without fear. I told her that I had been waiting for hours and that we had to decide, once and for all, what was going on with us. I wasn't angry with her. On the contrary. I spoke softly. We kissed, and I gave her a silver bracelet that I had bought her. I said, "Take this to remember me by." I had reached the sad conclusion that we had to separate, and I gave it to her as a going-away present. "We either stay together or split up. This is destroying me and it is destroying you," I said. "You are doing stupid things, and I might, too."

She accepted the bracelet, but said, "Look, if we are not together, then it's none of your business what I do. And if we do get back together, you will have to see me sleep with other men sometimes, because you are impotent and too old for me."

At that moment, because of my strong feelings of love and jealousy, my whole world flipped over. I hated her terribly. I think she was only trying to tease me, because we never had any problems in bed. I, who was always surrounded by women and functioned exceptionally in bed, was hurt that she called me impotent and the reminder of my age was no compliment.

When I went to meet her, all I wanted was a clear answer. I wanted to put an end the uncertainty that I had been living in. I preferred to split up with her, rather than live in ambiguity. The sentence she said to me not only did not end the uncertainty, but added to it. Now I had to face worse things than before.

When we had first started together, I thought that I had found the one girl I could be with, and stop hopping from woman to woman. Maybe that is why I was so hurt by what she had said to me.

I stood there with my loaded weapon (I had come straight from reserve duty). Suddenly, when she teased me and said that she might sleep with other men, I saw nothing. I was in some sort of blackout. "You bitch!" I shouted, and fired a round at her.

Group Decision-Making

The process of group decision-making is, under certain circumstances, very different from that of the individual. Janis (1972) claims that, groups in which there is: (1) strong uniformity; (2) isolation from exterior information or influence; (3) lack of procedures for systematic evaluation of alternatives; (4) convincing, dynamic leadership; and (5) pressure of an exterior threat - these conditions create groupthink, which means a group process of decision-making, which is not the sum or the average of the personal decisions of the group members.

The characteristics of groupthink are a feeling of invulnerability, pressure on the group members to conform, and stereotyping of those who are not part of the group. These conditions are a hothouse for irrational, failing decisions, mainly due to the tendency to ignore any information contrary to the group's position, the limited capability of the group to analyze existing information, and because no search is made for additional alternatives. The most famous example of this process is the decision-making of the Kennedy Administration about the aborted invasion of Cuba.

In the early sixties, when the research of decision-making processes was still fairly new, it was thought (Stoner, 1961) that groups take greater risks than the individuals they consist of. Later research discovered that groups reach far more extreme decisions, not necessarily higher-risk ones. For example, if individual town-council members are somewhat opposed to pollution caused by new factories, the town-council will reach a stronger decision against pollution, than the average of the members' views. Further explanations of this issue can be found in Mackie (1986).

The following chapter brings the stories of two homicide cases, committed by groups in the criminal world. The victim in the first case was an old, lonely woman, who was murdered without intent during a group robbery. The second murder was committed with premeditation by Arab family members over a family quarrel.

Shaul Zabari

The interview with Shaul Zabari was held at the Masiyahu Prison after he had served twelve years of his sentence, during which time he had studied for a degree in psychology and education.

There was a woman in our neighborhood who was married to the most famous drug dealers. Occasionally I used to baby-sit for them. One day she said to me, "We have a neighbor with a lot of money. If you want to prove your bravery, go get his briefcase."

The briefcase was on the table in his workshop. I went in there and stole the case. I was known in the neighborhood, and he had seen me go in, so when he realized later that his briefcase had disappeared, he reported it to the police and gave them my name.

I wanted to prove myself to her husband that I could keep a secret and be one of the gang. Something like a Bar Mitzvah or an initiation ceremony. That was my first crime.

The judge in the juvenile court decided to send me to a home for delinquent children. I didn't adjust there either. I used to run away, steal small things from vendors, sell them and run home. The management used to call the police, and they would take me back.

One night four of us from the home broke into the grocery store where we bought our cigarettes and candy. We were questioned, and one boy admitted to the break in and claimed, rightly so, that it had all been my idea.

They decided to kick me out after I had a criminal record. I was tried in juvenile court, and sent this time to a closed facility for juvenile delinquents.

There was an instructor there called Gershon, and we met on the lawn every evening. He sat on a chair, and we all sat around him. He told us stories by famous writers, like Bialik or Shalom Aleichem, and one of us was supposed to give his thesis about the story. After listening to us, he would tell each of us what he thought about our future. I remember that he asked me after one such story, and I answered cheekily that I was not interested in stories. He looked at me and said, "Boy, you will end as a murderer at the gates of the Beer-Sheva prison."

"Gershon, why would you say such a thing to me?"

"I can see you committing the last crime of your life. It will be a horrible crime, but also your last one."

When I answered him I was angry and impatient, and he saw that my impulsiveness would lead me to disaster. I am sure that today I could also identify the boys who will end as murderers.

I started running away from there too. I was afraid of the things my instructor had told me, and I ran away from him because he saw through me. I was fifteen at the time. I no longer ran home to my parents, but slept in parks, or broke into

homes or businesses, stole money, and paid for a room in hotels that didn't ask questions.

One day I was caught during a break in. The judge sent me to the top-security juvenile facility. It had high walls and cells locked with heavy iron doors. I ran away from there too. I committed some property crimes with other criminals and when they were apprehended, they mentioned my name, and I was wanted by the police. My level of crime rose, because I needed more money to stay in hiding. I was captured in the end, and sent to Tel-Mond juvenile prison. I was sentenced to two and a half years, but was given an additional year for bad behavior.

Every new inmate is tested by the others to see if he is a man or a weakling. If he was a weakling he was used by the others for sex against his will. If he was a man, he achieved a position of power. One night I was jumped by three boys, who held my arms and legs, closed my mouth, and tried to undress me in order to rape me. I managed to shake them off and stabbed one of them in the stomach with a sharpened spoon. When we went to prison, I knew that the test would come one day, and I prepared for it by having a weapon ready. The wounded attacker complained to the prison authorities, an investigator was summoned, and I had a record for severe bodily harm. That is how I got the additional year.

I didn't use drugs even in jail, not even hashish. I knew that it was sold, smoked and gave pleasure, but it had no attractions for me.

I was released from jail at the age of nineteen and wanted to join the army. I asked for a front line unit. I knew that it would be the only way to keep me away from home and my criminal surroundings. But, due to my criminal record, the army would not take me.

It was two months after my release that I broke into houses again. I was out of jail for two years. My list of crimes grew, from simple theft to complicated breaking and entering, such as safes. I started doing robberies as well. Once I stole a gun, which gave me the idea to use it. I decided that instead of working on the locks, it would be much easier for the owner to unlock the safe at gun point.

My first armed robbery was at a jeweler workshop in central Tel-Aviv. There were three goldsmiths who worked on jewel samples. I had a partner for the job. We stole a car, and he was the driver. He was not brave enough to go in with a gun. I wore a ski mask and went in with a drawn gun, shouting, "This is an armed robbery. Don't move. Put all the money and jewels in this bag." They didn't hesitate, because a man with a mask and a gun is very frightening. Had they resisted, I think I would have run away, but I am not sure. You cannot know how things turn out. The gun was loaded, because I had to fire one shot in the air to show that I was serious. I knew they would not resist. I never thought of the possibility of anyone resisting. And that is how it was. They put the money and jewels into my bag, and we got away.

I felt good after this job, knowing I could do daring things. That evening we went out in style with a couple of young women from the neighborhood. The next day I tried to sell some of the jewels to a man I knew dealt with stolen property. That man told me to bring the jewels to him for an evaluation.

When I showed up that night, as arranged, police detectives were waiting for me and arrested me. I did not confess. I said that I had bought the goods, and was trying to sell it. The police could not prove that I had committed the robbery, so I was sentenced to a year and a half for keeping stolen property.

When I was in jail, I realized that it didn't take a gun to get money. Commerce in drugs was widespread in jail. I knew people who dealt in drugs on a large scale. When I was released, I decided to use these contacts and make big money in a different way than before.

I started dealing in heroin. I bought it cheap, and sold it for a lot more. A kilo of heroin cost me thirty thousand dollars, and I sold it for fifty or sixty thousand. When I had enough money, I decided to go abroad and try to import it myself at a much lower price. I wanted to make a trip, ending in Holland, where I intended to buy five kilos of heroin and bring it into Israel. I went on my trip, but the scale of drug use there frightened me. I saw junkies kill each other for one shot. It disgusted me, so I decided not to import. Instead, I looked for an adventure in Europe. I pulled off a few independent robberies. I robbed shops, banks, hotels, jewelers, old-age homes and so on.

I was in Europe for a year and decided to return home. When I got back, with no money, I had no home and no income. I decided to make one big hit, and stop with crime. I saw that money kept running through my fingers. I wanted to buy a house and start a business, so that I had a regular source of income.

I met Avner. He was in the army with my neighbor, Amir. We met on one of their leaves from the army. Amir told him about my past. On another occasion Avner told me that he knew an old woman with a lot of money, who dealt in dollars, and that it would be worthwhile to go to her apartment and rob her.

I liked the idea of a big robbery. Before that I had not robbed old people on principle. It bothered me to rob an old lady, but he assured me that we would not harm her. Just take the money and run. She would probably not even be home.

One night Avner came to tell me that it was the right night. She had just received a large sum of money, and she kept it at home. We called Amir, who was not a criminal, and decided to do it. The plan was for me to climb up the outside wall, enter through a window and open the front door for them. We did not think she would be home. We were not armed. We had come just to break in. I broke into her apartment and opened the front door. We were surprised to hear someone asleep in one of the rooms. I asked Avner, "What shall we do? She is at home. Maybe we should leave and come back another time?"

He said that she might be hiding the money on her person and suggested that we search for it quietly and then leave.

We made some noise in the dark and the woman woke up. She started screaming and we had to shut her up. Avner jumped and put his hand over her mouth to keep her quiet. She went wild. We were scared and didn't know what to do. We decided to tie her up. We couldn't escape, because she would scream and we would be caught, so we tied her up and had to gag her. We also said to her, "Don't be afraid, we won't harm you."

I felt sorry for her. She was a helpless old woman, and we were three young men, who tied her up and there was nothing she could do.

We searched the apartment but found nothing. I asked Avner, "Buddy, where is the money? We are already involved in a robbery, not just breaking and entering." Avner said that he had been told there would be a lot of money. I realized that other people, apart from the three of us, knew about this.

We decided to escape. We passed through the room of the old woman, and saw that she was still. She had stopped shouting and carrying on. Avner went up to her, checked, looked, and said that she wasn't moving.

I was really scared. I knew that something bad had happened. I was afraid to think that she was dead. I knew that she was an old lady and I was very apprehensive.

I remember that when we left I told them to wait for me outside. I untied her, but left the gag in her mouth. I wanted her to be able to call for help after we left. But, after I had untied her and saw that she wasn't moving, I was sure something had happened to her and decided to call an ambulance as soon as we were out of there.

We got away and when I got to my house I went to a pay phone, called the paramedics, told them that a woman needed help, and gave them the address. They asked for our phone number to verify the call, but I couldn't give it, because the pay phone was right next to my house. After the fact, I found out that they had ignored my call and the woman died.

I cannot grasp the fact that I committed murder. If I had gone to a bank, pulled a gun and said, "This is a robbery, don't move!" and someone moved and I shot him, I would be able to accept that I had killed someone. But when all you intend is to break in and such a thing happens, I cannot accept that I committed murder.

Zuheir Mahamid

My great love was our neighbor's daughter. She was not especially beautiful, but to me she was the fairest of them all. We drove to school in Hebron together. We did not study together, because Arab boys and girls go to separate schools, but we saw each other almost every day. We never kissed, but we were head over heels in love. I wrote her initial everywhere. The entire village knew of our love story.

After three years of love, I promised to marry her, but then her family opposed our relationship, because we were too young. I was eighteen and she was fifteen. They would not have opposed our marriage if it were possible, but they also refused to let us see each other anymore. They were afraid she would lose her virginity, which would be an issue of family honor.

Apart from her age, there were other reasons for not getting married. I was the youngest son in our family. Not all my older brothers were married and I could not get married before them. Our family's economic situation also prevented me from marrying.

She had to give in to her family's pressure and went to Jordan to study. The only time I kissed her was when we parted. I returned her letters and pictures, and we said goodbye.

When my mother died in 1979, my life started going downhill drastically. I lived in various places - at my sister's, with relatives, with friends, in Tel-Aviv restaurants, and finally, three years after my mother's death, I moved in with my father's relatives, who lived in Israel near Beer-Sheva.

My relatives had weapons. As Israeli citizens (not Palestinians Arabs of the West Bank) it was easier for them. They were locksmith contractors, and they used to harass and threaten their competitors or anyone who didn't cooperate with them. They terrorized other people, and I began taking part in their acts of terror. At the time, it seemed to me that we were "tough guys." We were a gang of strong-arms, who controlled the Arab sector. We worked in Israel and the West Bank, but only against Arabs. We torched cars and olive trees.

Today, when I think about it, this kind of behavior seems mean and low, but at the time it seemed to me like Mafia activity, of which I was a soldier.

After my mother's death, I did many things not befitting a traditional Arab boy. I used to take a taxi to Beer-Sheva and go to prostitutes. I paid them, screwed them for five minutes, and return to the village. I did this six or seven times.

The first woman I slept with was a whore. She was Jewish. I saw Arab whores too, but for some reason I chose a Jewish one. I had no special intention to screw the Jews.

I remember really wanting to sleep with a female soldier. I used to become upset whenever I saw one with a firearm, especially a long one, not an Uzi. I fantasized having sex with her, and she would put the rifle down to sleep with me.

A weapon that could control a hundred people, and she puts it aside for me. I am not up to placing bombs in Jewish settlements, but the thought of fucking a soldier really turned me on, as if I were screwing the state that screwed me.

I worked as a locksmith during the day, and at night I took care of people who bothered us. For instance, we wanted to open a big locksmith workshop outside the village, and needed a mile long electricity line. We demanded that the local council cover the cost of this, which was very expensive. The local council members refused. That night we shot at their houses. They took the hint, and immediately signed the necessary forms.

No one could touch us. We would harm anyone who even looked at us. We behaved like the Mafia. People knew that even if they were to complain to the police, there would be no evidence, and it would only cause more harm.

One day, one of our cars was burned. The next day dozens of olive trees belonging to someone else in our family were smashed. We felt pressured. We suspected that one of the village elders, Haj Abu-Haidar, had something to do with it, but we were not sure. We decided to abduct a young man who worked for Abu-Haidar, and interrogate him. This guy was a relative of Abu-Haidar, but was also a friend of mine. That is why I did not want to be involved in his capture and interrogation, because if we found out that he was involved in the burning of the car and the breaking of the olive trees, we would have had to kill him on the spot. The guy worked outside the village, and returned on foot every evening. My family caught him, interrogated him, and discovered that he had nothing to do with the affair.

We decided that there was no other way, but to interrogate Abu-Haidar himself. We also knew that we would kill him. We were not sure of his connection to the matter, but believed that he was responsible.

I remember the conversation well. After we saw the smashed olive trees, we sat at the home of one of us, and felt terrible anger. Clearly we had to do something. "Yesterday the car, today the olive trees, and tomorrow something much worse can happen."

We decided to abduct Abu-Haidar, interrogate him and kill him. We made meticulous plans. We did not want the matter to be found out. The plan was to drive to Hebron, where he worked, meet him, offer him a ride to the village, and then take him to a remote spot, far from the village.

Two men from our family came with him, and I joined them on the way. None of us had a weapon. It was ten o'clock in the morning. We said to him, "Don't scream and put your hands up!" We searched him for a gun he had a permit for, but found nothing. We tied his hands behind his back, gagged him with a kafiyah, and took him to a cave between the villages.

I stayed behind to guard him and interrogate him. The plan was to wait for all the family members to get back from work, and then strangle and bury him.

I stayed with him for nine hours. I was occasionally relieved by other people, but I was with him most of the time. I asked him whether he had anything to do with the damages done to us. He denied it vehemently, but couldn't convince me. Even

if he were innocent, it would have done no good. We had already decided to kill him. His fate was sealed.

Maybe we decided to kill him even if he was not connected to our damages, just to show everyone that we are not to be harmed. None of us said it outright, because we did not want to confront the idea of killing an innocent man, but deep down we knew that he might not be guilty, and that he might be just an outlet for our anger, no matter who actually harmed us.

That is exactly why all participants in the murder are now on bad terms with each other. If we had raised the doubt whether he was innocent, we might have changed our decision. Each of us preferred to go along with the group decision. No one changed his mind and no one acted as if he was hesitant or afraid.

I was not really concerned whether he had anything to do with the matter or not. My conscience had not been very active on previous occasions. In my view, ever since my mother died, I felt lost. My world was in ruins. I had nowhere to sleep, no one to do my laundry or prepare my food. My contact with my family caused the great escalation. I think I was hurt badly in my youth, and life with my family gang members gave me pride and self-respect.

I sat in the cave with him for hours. He tried to convince me that he was not involved. He knew us and knew of the terror we enforced. When he saw that he couldn't convince me, he realized that he would die, but he was not afraid and did not beg. He was a brave man. In his place, I might have pleaded and cried, but he didn't. He did not even shake.

I would like to tell his sons that their father died with honor. They should know that he behaved honorably to the very last minute, even though he was in the hands of people who would stop at nothing. Today I know that we were scum.

On my second vacation from jail, six years after the murder, I went to report at the Hebron Police Headquarters. I walked from the village, and saw one of the deceased's sons on the way. I was not afraid of him, but with every step toward him I felt smaller and smaller. When I reached him, I felt like an ant. He saw me, but I didn't have the courage to look him in the face. I felt it was bad enough just to walk past him. To this day, whenever I am home on vacation, I avoid passing by their house. We did a Sulha (forgiveness ceremony) years ago, but I cannot forget. It is on my conscience.

When I was alone with him, I did not have a moment of regret. My conscience was not working. No regret, nothing. I felt as if I was doing something serious. It was no longer a child's game, like shooting at someone's house at night. This was actually killing someone.

The rest of my family members arrived at night. I and two others went to dig his grave. When I spoke with him in the cave, he asked me to bury him in a place overlooking the village, if we killed him. The place we chose was suitable and we dug a grave about one mile away from the cave. An hour later the two others, who stayed with him, brought him with his hands tied and his mouth gagged.

When he arrived, one man jumped on him without warning, and started to strangle him. I joined in and the others, and we pulled together. We also punched and kicked him, probably to make him die faster, or maybe out of anger and hatred.

I certainly wanted to be part of it, to be a tough guy, not a minor participant.

The whole thing took a few minutes. I do not believe he was already dead when we threw him into the hole, with his hands tied and a kafiyah over his mouth and neck. We covered him with earth, closed the hole and disguised the signs.

On the way back it rained heavily, which obstructed our footprints. I felt that God was helping us and showing us that we did the right thing.

It took me three years in jail to start regretting the murder.

The Truth, the Whole Truth, and Nothing but the Truth

Any three different instruments, which measure the same physical phenomenon, give slightly varied readings. The variations depend upon the accuracy of the instruments and the accuracy of the person using them.

To a much greater extent, when three people observe an event, interpret it, explain it and react to it, they may reach very different conclusions and a very different view of reality. To each of the participants, the so-called "truth" is not only perceived differently, but also changes with time. Identical information may have a different significance for each of them.

Approximately two hundred people were asked to give a numeric estimate (in percent) of various expressions of probability, such as "probably," "very likely," and so on. The estimates of "very unlikely" were anywhere between 1% and 30%. The estimates of "there is a good chance" were between 25% and 96%, and for "probable," as well as for "possible," the estimates ran from 1% to 99%. This research, conducted by Newman & Lichtenstein (1967), shows that people interpret expressions of probability, heard from experts, such as lawyers or doctors, differently, and more so when these expressions show up in the media.

Many think that more people die in the USA from homicide than from diabetes, although 55,100 people died in 1993 from diabetes and "only" 25,500 were murdered. The main reason is that homicide cases are widely covered by the media. This deflection, by which people evaluate a phenomenon as more probable, because it is easier to hear about and recall, is called "availability." (Tversky & Kahneman, 1973).

Someone was hit by a car on a pedestrian crossing. Which seems more probable that he crossed at the WALK light or at the DON'T WALK (DW)light? Most people say that he crossed at the DW light. This could be a wrong answer. The reason for the mistake is the fact that we ignore the frequency of people crossing at a DW light and those crossing at a WALK light. Let us assume that out of one million people who cross streets at pedestrian crossings 990,000 cross at a WALK light and 10,000 at a DW one. Let us also assume that the chance to be hit by a car when crossing at a DW light is ten times greater than when crossing at a WALK light. The data is presented in the following table.

	crossed at		
	WALK	DON 'T WALK	total
hit	99	10	109
total	990,000	10,000	1,000,000

The number of people hit by a car is the result of the number of people who cross the street multiplied by the chances of being hit. The chances of being hit with a DW light are ten times greater, but more significant is the fact that 99 times more people cross at a WALK light. 99 out of the total 109 who were hit (91%) crossed with a WALK light and only 9% at a DW light. We think that more people were hit when crossing at a DW light, because it is more dangerous to do so, and because it is easier for us to imagine an accident when crossing the street with a DW light than with a WALK one.

This deflection, by which people estimate the probability of an event by the extent to which it can be imagined, i.e., the extent to which it seems to represent reality, is called "representativeness." (Kahneman & Tversky, 1972).

Another example, "In a certain research, one school worker was chosen randomly. Her name was Ruth, a quiet young woman, very orderly and helpful." In view of her description, most people think it more probable that Ruth is a librarian, not a teacher, and ignore the fact that there are very few librarians in a school, relative to teachers.

A last example of representativeness is when people think that the chance of drawing the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 in a lottery is smaller than the chance of drawing the numbers 1, 16, 17, 22, 29 and 34, although the chances of both series are equal. For more examples of availability and representativeness see Kahneman, Slovic & Tversky (1982).

The above examples present mistakes in evaluation of chances, which lead to different evaluations of reality by different people. In a similar fashion, there are differences in the ways people perceive and interpret the possible results of their decisions. The most famous example of this is the "Framing Effect." Tversky & Kahneman (1986) showed that people chose differently when the very same problem was presented to them in a positive or in a negative light. When a problem is presented in a positive way, as a choice between two good alternatives, most people tend to avoid risk and prefer the low but sure profit to the high but uncertain profit. For example, people would prefer to receive \$3000 in cash, rather than \$4000 at an 80% chance. When a problem is presented in a negative way, as a choice between two bad alternatives, most people do not choose the certain loss, but take a risk and choose the alternative in which there is a possibility not to lose at all, but also a chance of a greater loss. For example, most people would not prefer to pay \$3000 in cash, but would prefer an 80% chance of paying \$4000 and a 20% chance of paying nothing.

Similarly, during the Gulf War, when it was reported that 30% of the Iraqi tanks were destroyed, people felt better, but when the reporter announced that 70% of the Iraqi tanks were still operative, people felt worse.

The various ways in which people evaluate reality, and the fact that their information sources could be different, create a different view of "truth" and a different reality for different people.

Amos Oz (1992), an Israeli novelist, wrote, "Facts can, at times, be the archenemy of truth . . . Truth is related to the facts, but is much more than an

accumulation of facts . . . Truth is, perhaps, related to images and metaphors, but is not a synonym to them. An image, even a mistaken or refuted image, any image, can kill people."

This chapter, which describes a homicide committed by three people on ideological nationalistic grounds, stresses how different the truths of each of the participants were. The final result of their action - damage to property, bodily harm, or murder - was not equally clear to all three of them, if at all, and was altered with time. This chapter also presents the factors of group decision-making, as described previously, which led to a more extreme decision than the group members had individually anticipated.

Ziv Berman

The reason I transferred to the Naval Officers School was that I wanted to leave home, meet new people and also because I love the sea. I liked the idea of being an officer at sea. I really wanted to join the naval commandos, but was turned down due to poor eyesight, so the Naval Officers Course - which entails lots of intellectual and command challenge - was an excellent alternative.

I was accepted to the course, and passed the pre-course team-building period which was very demanding, both physically and psychologically, and started basic training. At this point, a problem with my foot was diagnosed, and the doctors defined it as recurrent sprains. As the final march drew closer, I knew that if I didn't complete it, I couldn't carry on in Officers Course. With tremendous efforts, I finished the march.

I started the second stage, which takes place at sea, and it should have been easy for me. Most of the cadets at this stage have never even sailed in a yacht, while I had experience in launching and sailing a boat, as well as theoretical knowledge: astronomy, knots, signals and so on.

The problem with the sea stage is that it also includes marches, three each week. As a result, I had to leave the course for health reasons, and this caused me immense frustration. I couldn't understand why problems with my feet during marches should prevent me from being a missile-boat officer. But there was no one to argue with.

Since I couldn't fulfill my goal of being a missile-ship officer, my mental state was rather low. I felt that my self-image had sunk. My girlfriend was an Air Force officer, and I felt inferior compared to her. I wanted to prove that I was someone, even though I'd had to quit Officers Course. I'd had very high hopes from the army, I'd considered being a Navy career officer, but somehow everything had got fouled-up and left me feeling miserable.

One day, on leave, a friend of mine introduced me to one of his friends. He said to me, "Meet Gadi, you should have a word with him." It was only later that I understood what he meant.

The same evening, we were in a pub, talking. He was a charismatic person, with trustworthy features and a very persuasive style of talking. At some point, I asked him why our mutual friend said we should have a talk. He answered, "I need you," and then started talking about himself. He said he was in the Shabac (the General Security Services), and his cover was that of a policeman in the Israel Police Force. He showed me his police ID card and told me some stories about the Shabac and the operations he'd taken part in. They seemed very authentic to me, because he'd shown me his policeman's ID. At that time, a cop was for me the acme of reliability. I had no reason to suspect that everything was not above board, and that in fact (as I would learn only in court) he was just a mechanic at a Police station garage.

He said he'd heard I knew karate, and that the Shabac had given him the task of setting up a unit for performing missions which the arms of the law couldn't do. For example, if it was proven that someone was involved in terrorist activities, but there was insufficient evidence to prove it in court, the unit would handle it. It didn't seem too far-fetched, because it sounded like Mossad operations overseas, and I thought that the Shabac might well run a similar setup within Israel. He wanted to assign me the role of training the unit's members in hand-to-hand combat.

I agreed straight away. A few months went by, and I met him now and then. He said the setting-up process was going ahead, but the unit didn't need me yet.

One day he phoned me at home, inviting me to meet a girl, one of the team members. He'd recruited her, he said, after running thorough checkouts, by computer and by some other sources.

The three of us met at a cafe in the Jerusalem Central Bus Station. He introduced her as Sigal, and we talked for half an hour about this and that. I was rather surprised that a girl like her had been recruited by the Shabac. She didn't make a very positive impression on me. She behaved nervously and had a screeching voice, which rose and fell sharply. She was unkempt and a little unbalanced. Not the sort of woman you'd want as a girlfriend and definitely not one you'd like as a fellow-conspirator, to share your secrets about an operation - which is what I thought was the case.

A month later I met them twice more, by chance. The unit wasn't mentioned during these meetings. They said there were organizational and budgetary problems but even so, they had to plan some kind of response to the terrorist attacks which were happening at that time in Jerusalem.

The whole thing seemed a bit weird to me. Something was fishy. If setting up the unit had been authorized, why were there budget problems? And if it hadn't been set up, why were they planning a retaliation? I debated with myself how much I trusted Gadi. I went to our mutual friend, who'd introduced us, to get his opinion and ask him whether all Gadi had told me was true. He said that Gadi was a reliable guy, no problems. This reassured me a little, but not completely. The next time we met, I told Gadi I wanted to meet his superior officer. "No problem," he said, he would set up a meeting soon, but the man would be masked, so I couldn't identify him.

My suspicions lessened a bit, and I waited for the meeting to take place. Over a week, I called Gadi several times to hear what was happening with it. He said that the man was abroad, but I'd meet him soon. Two weeks later I met Gadi and Sigal again. I asked, "What's happening with the meeting?" He replied that it would be the following week, but he didn't understand why I was so eager to meet him, because anyway I wouldn't be able to identify him. He might be behind a curtain, and anyway "What do you need him for?" At this point, Sigal also started asking why I needed the meeting, and they convinced me that it wasn't actually so important. I was still interested in a meeting, mainly out of curiosity, but I didn't insist. He went on that if they'd need some sort of operation to be performed before

I met his commanding officer, and if I'd take part in it, he would be sure to speak to the superior officers who would formally induct me to the Shabac, and then I would be able to meet with his superior officer openly.

The next day I returned to my base. I was on continuous guard duty for twenty-four hours, and afterwards I went home for a one day leave. That evening, the phone rang. It was Gadi on the line, and he asked me, "Did you hear what happened?" I said that I hadn't. "What, haven't you read the papers?" I answered in the negative. He told me that a Jewish cab driver had been murdered in Jerusalem. I said, "That's terrible, but what's it got to do with me?" He answered that the murder had been carried out by Arabs, and the Shabac had given him the mission to retaliate by attacking an Arab known to be involved in terrorist acts. I didn't see what it had to do with me, since I was supposed to be involved in teaching karate, but I agreed to meet him at the pub.

At the pub, I met Gadi and Sigal, who were half-hysterical from the Jewish cab driver's murder the previous day. Both of them said fervently that something should be done.

"What do you mean, something should be done?" I asked.

"There should be a response to that murder," they said.

Out of curiosity, not because I wanted to participate actively, I asked, "so what should be done?"

"An Arab has to be taken care of," Gadi answered.

"Is it someone specific?"

"That's not your concern."

"Do you know exactly what has to be done?"

"Yes, the Arab must be shot."

"Have you got a weapon?" I wanted to see whether he was serious, or whether he was still talking about planning and organizing, which had been going on for some months already.

"It's not a problem," he said, "I'll get one."

"I see that nothing is clear. If you have something solid, call me."

I got up and went home. The whole thing seemed vague. That night, at eleven-thirty, Gadi phoned and said, "Meet me downstairs in uniform. I'll pick you up."

"What happened?"

"Get downstairs and don't ask questions."

I felt something was actually happening, and decided that perhaps at last I'd find out if Gadi's story was really true. With khaki military overalls in my hand, I slipped out of the house, so my parents wouldn't be surprised by seeing me in uniform at this time of night. I was prepared to help Gadi if it transpired that he really was in the Shabac. I left the house feeling that I was going to do something important and exceptional. As I went downstairs, I thought that - apart from finding out the truth about Gadi - I'd have the opportunity to prove to myself that I was worth more than others thought.

I waited at the entrance to the building for a couple of minutes, and then Gadi appeared with Sigal. He was in uniform and she wore a military coat.

"Get in the car and don't ask questions," he said. We drove toward Tel-Aviv and then toward Haifa. When I asked where we were heading, he answered, "You'll see right away."

Most of the journey passed in relative silence. I felt that something was about to happen, and I was tense with expectancy. When we reached the Beit-Lid junction, he turned off toward the orange groves. He drove as if he knew the area and all the dirt-tracks in it. He said we were going to an army base to take a weapon.

This caused all kinds of doubts and queries to start gnawing me. I didn't understand whether the word "take" meant to receive or to steal, and I started to feel we were involved in something illegal. The whole thing seemed strange, and I asked him, "What do you mean by take? If you have to perform a mission, why don't you get a weapon from the Shabac?"

"To take means to take, and the weapon which we'll use for the operation mustn't be known, so that's why it can't be a Shabac weapon. Anyway, I know this base, and everything will be OK."

The car stopped in one of the orange groves. We got out, I put on the uniform and he led us to a hole in the camp's perimeter fence. It was amazing. It was pitch-black, we couldn't see a foot in front of us, yet he was completely at home. It made me think that he knew what he was doing. I still had doubts, but I felt as if I was following a commander who knows exactly what he's doing, and this gave me confidence.

Inside the army base, he led us like someone completely at home. There was no one around. We reached a group of buildings. Gadi went into some of the rooms, without turning on the lights, and returned some minutes later. He said he couldn't find the gun he was looking for, and we started back in the direction of the exit. On the way, we met two women soldiers who were on guard duty. They asked us for identification, and then Gadi took them aside, explained something to them, and we walked back to the car.

On the way to Jerusalem, I tried again to clarify his connection with the Shabac and its connection with the operation. His answers convinced me, more or less, that it was OK. During the drive, I don't remember how, the idea came up that I would give my gun for use in the operation. I thought this would give me away, but somehow felt it was permissible, as the operation had official backing from the Shabac. In spite of this, I didn't promise to bring my gun, and I still had some doubts. The next day, Gadi phoned me at the base. He wanted us to meet, and we agreed that he'd pick me up that evening.

When Gadi arrived by car, Sigal was with him. This surprised me. I didn't expect her to be there. I got into the car, and then Gadi said, "The operation must be carried out tonight."

"What's been planned?" I asked.

"I've been given the mission of wasting an Arab, and we'll do it tonight with your gun."

We drove to my home. I made more inquiries, and he told me that I would have to shoot the Arab. It seemed very strange to me. I didn't feel capable of shooting anyone, and apart from that, suddenly all sorts of suspicions about the past weeks surfaced, and I said, "After all, you're a Shabac member, so you should shoot, not me."

"No problem," he said right away. This strengthened my feeling that there really was backing and that he was part of a larger organization.

The plan was for Gadi and Sigal to go the Arab cab rank in East Jerusalem and ask the driver to drive to Ma'aleh Edumim. I would follow them in Gadi's car. At a certain point, Sigal would pretend to feel ill, the driver would pull off the road, Sigal would get out of the car, Gadi and I were to check that the road was empty, and then Gadi would shoot the driver, I'd pick them up and then return to Jerusalem. After spending half an hour in my house, I took my gun and left.

My doubts didn't relate to whether the operation was justified and right, but to whether Gadi really was with the Shabac. If this was so, then it was legitimate and obligatory to do the deed, because the decision had been taken by authorized entities, with their full backing. I didn't believe that, if Gadi wasn't a Shabac member, he would actually carry out the operation, and the whole matter would be another tale which never happened. It would finally prove, once and for all, whether he was with the Shabac or not. This was the basis of my internal debate.

It was midnight. We drove in pouring rain to the cab station in East Jerusalem, after having visited the location where the operation would be carried out. Gadi was driving and I was thinking again about the deed to be done. Even though the word "kill" hadn't been specifically voiced once, it was quite clear to me that the Arab driver was going to be killed. During the drive, I wanted Gadi to turn out to be a Shabac member. He promised me that once we'd performed the operation, I would be accepted into the ranks of the Shabac. If he's responsible for this sort of mission, I thought, I can definitely reach a much higher level and rank than him. I thought that if the whole thing came off, it could make up for the disappointment and frustration I'd undergone when I left the Navy officers course.

When we reached the cab station, I avoided looking at the driver of the cab they drove in. Even if the act was justified, I couldn't handle his face in my memory. As long as everything was blurred, and I had no direct link with the operation, it all seemed like a movie which I was watching from the sidelines. As I drove after the cab, I was busy with the tailing process, and the thoughts I'd been thinking beforehand came into my mind again. At a certain stage, the cab stopped, as planned.

Since other cars were driving along the road, I stopped alongside the cab, to delay the driver and prevent him from suspecting anything until the cars had passed us. I asked him why he had stopped, and at the same time an Israeli civilian car passed us and parked 30 yards away from the cab. The driver got out and walked toward us, in complete darkness and pouring rain. Gadi walked toward him,

dressed in army uniform and with my gun. Two minutes later they separated. Gadi returned, and I asked him, "Who's the guy?" "It's OK," he answered, "it's all according to plan."

At this moment I was positive that this was a Shabac operation.

Traffic along the road ceased. I got into Gadi's car and started driving toward Ma'aleh Edumim. After five hundred yards, I heard three shots. I turned back to pick up Gadi and Sigal. From the sight of their white, alarmed faces as they entered the car, I knew I had been duped the whole time. Gadi had never been with the Shabac.

Sigal Baruchi

Right through childhood and adolescence I never had any personal conflicts with Arabs. When I was at the university, it was a very 'hot' period with the Arab students. They were carrying out provocations and organizing all sorts of demonstrations. Around that time, the story of the Jewish underground broke. Their arrest shocked me, as did the possibility of Jews retaliating. At first I didn't like the idea, but the more I thought it over, the more I grew to like it. I thought, "Well, why not?" but didn't talk to anyone about the whole thing. At the same time, I considered joining some kind of political activity with the "Techia" (extreme right-wing) movement, but I didn't get around to it as I was so busy with my studies.

I met Gadi at that time. He was a very charismatic type, as a person and as a man. To say that I did what I did because I was attracted to him is a wild exaggeration. Gadi was a catalyst. In our first meeting he introduced himself as being in active service, operating against the other side. I didn't particularly believe him, but I couldn't be sure that he wasn't a member of the Shabac. We met now and then, and he always said that retaliations should be organized against what the Arabs were doing. His words were unclear and non-committing, but had a sense of purpose. Gadi's personality fascinated me. I love the bizarre. I was very interested in weird things at that time. I liked the thought of being spontaneous, and his proposals felt right for me then.

One Friday (laughing tremendously) Gadi and Ziv came to pick me up from my parents' house. Gadi said that we had to find financial backing. We went to a snack-bar and Gadi burst in there with the intention of finding backing. Ziv and I waited outside. It was so funny, just like the Secret Seven. I'll never forget how he walked out with bags of pistachios and cigarettes, and I burst out laughing.

All three of us were anguished by what was going on in the country. Being afraid to walk the streets of Jerusalem. Every week or two a Jew was slaughtered in Jerusalem. There was a wave of hatred and violence. Maybe the pain didn't generate hate, but it did cause a lot of anger against the government, for its ostrich policy and for our armed forces which seemed impotent. All the political parties prattled on, but none of them explained what was to be done. If the government had proved that it was doing anything about terrorism, I don't think that individuals like us would have taken the law into our hands. There was a feeling of collective helplessness. This was the atmosphere on campus and in the Jerusalem street, generally.

One day a Jewish cab driver was murdered in Jerusalem. I'd arranged to meet Gadi that day in his friend's pub. At that same meeting, at that pub, we decided to do something. Gadi and I knew it. We sat in the pub and I asked Gadi, "Did you hear what happened?"

"I thought we should do something in retribution," he said.

"You've taken the words out of my mouth"

I don't remember which of us specifically brought up the idea of murdering a cab driver. Either me or him. We'd decided - an eye for an eye. Exactly what they did to the Jewish cab driver. We planned even more than what we actually did. We wanted the Arabs to understand our message completely. We considered writing it on the cab - an eye for an eye. So it would be very clear and specific. Not just vengeance, but so they would see and be afraid.

In full possession of my senses and with a cool head, I understood that I was about to take part in a murder. I didn't have any moral problems, or other problems. No problems at all. Even without the exposure of the Jewish Underground, I would have done it.

That evening, in the pub, Gadi said he knew an army camp where he'd served once, where weapons were lying around, and he could get a gun to do the deed with. I didn't care then if he was with the Shabac or not. The whole Shabac story faded slowly, and what controlled me was the decision "to do it."

All three of us put on army uniform and we set out. We drove at night. The rain was coming down in torrents. I wasn't familiar with the road, but I remember that we drove through orange groves. We got into the camp through a hole in the fence. It was so easy, it was unbelievable. Gadi went into one of the huts and came out some minutes later - weaponless. As we were leaving, some soldiers saw us, and Gadi, to calm their suspicions, showed them his policeman's ID card. I was angry at him at that moment, because he'd acted carelessly, by identifying himself.

Gadi drove back to Jerusalem. They dropped me off at my parents' after we'd agreed to meet the next evening and to use Ziv's gun.

The next day, Gadi and I drove to Ziv's house. I remember that while we were sitting there, I looked at Ziv and told him he was giving his gun and we should all be aware of what we were going to do and that we could get caught, and if we got caught, it meant life for all three of us.

The moment Gadi and I made the initial decision to attack an Arab driver, I became committed to the idea. I wanted Ziv also to be aware of what he was taking upon himself.

To my mind, at the very moment, Ziv stopped being an accessory and became the major partner, because the gun was his. I wanted Ziv also to be aware of what he was taking upon himself. Ziv wasn't a child. He was a soldier, and I wanted to know that I hadn't incited a child to perform a felony, that he should be a full partner in the decision. I didn't want it on my conscience and have him say that he followed our lead.

I'm not sure whether Ziv already knew that Gadi wasn't Shabac. It's quite possible, it's even logical, that he still believed him.

We took the gun. Gadi asked, "Shall I put the gun in a bag?" I suggested that Gadi wear uniform and carry the gun, and that's what happened. We drove to the French Hill. The rain was a deluge. I think there was a Maccabee basketball game on TV, so the streets were deserted.

We were scared that we might stop a Jewish cab driver by mistake. Gadi and I waited at the street corner for a cab to drive by, and Ziv sat behind us, in Gadi's private car.

No cabs passed us. We decided to go down to the cab stations by the Flower Gate. We were sure there would be Arab taxis there. We didn't go right into the station, but stood to one side, waiting for a cab to drive up. A cab arrived, we got in and asked to be taken to Ma'aleh Edumim. On the way, I pretended to feel ill. Gadi asked the driver whether he was married and if he had children. He replied that he was single. Both of us sat in the back seat, and Gadi, during the drive, loaded the gun and cocked it.

At a certain junction before Ma'aleh Edumim, I told the driver, who spoke Hebrew, to stop because I had to vomit. I got out of the car at a run, because I didn't want to see what was going to happen, so I hid behind a rock.

The driver, a poor guy, felt that his end was near and asked, "What's going on here?" I felt a bit sorry for him, but even so I was determined that we should do what we'd decided.

Ziv arrived, stopped by the cab, pretended to check the licenses, went back to the car, drove on ahead and then turned back toward us. I didn't see Gadi shoot. It was raining and dark. I heard three shots and smelled gunpowder. The smell is what I remember best from the whole event. I ran toward Ziv's car. Gadi was already inside, and we drove rapidly toward Jerusalem.

Gadi Brickman

The whole murder story started with money problems. I was living in Ma'aleh Edumim and working as a mechanic at the Police garage in Tel-Aviv. I used to leave home at five in the morning, travel to Tel-Aviv and reach home at six in the evening.

I knew someone who owned a pub, and as I was strapped for cash, I started working behind the bar every night, until one in the morning. The work involved preparing drinks, and drinking with the customers while talking to them. Often I'd be drunk by the end of work, and would have to be helped to get home.

Because of my excessive drinking, lack of sleep and hard work, I started 'losing it'. I was like this for a year. I became an alcoholic in the course of a year. I had to have a drink very frequently. My wife didn't like it at all, but she knew we needed the money and so she put up with it.

This was the time when I met Ziv and Sigal. It was a time when there was a general feeling of insecurity in the Jerusalem area. Stones were being thrown, people were murdered and everyone talked about the situation, saying something should be done and things couldn't go on this way.

One night at the pub, Sigal walked in and asked, "Did you hear what happened? A taxi driver's been murdered." It was a Jewish cab driver, who was murdered on the road to Ma'aleh Edumim.

I'd thought before about doing something. We never mentioned murder. Ziv and I had discussed it previously. Once, while we were sitting in the pub, my wallet fell open and my police ID card fell out. Ziv asked me why I had one, and I said I was on active service. The Shabac wasn't mentioned or anything similar. By 'service' I meant service in the police force. My close friends in the pub joined us. Everyone, except me and Ziv, was carrying pistols of some sort. Some just liked guns, some needed the feeling of security, and others were showing off. They asked me, "Hey, Gadi - you're in the Service?" I answered "Yes." It didn't bother me that they'd think I was in the Shabac, not the police. Later on, when I told them I was a cop and not in the Service, nobody believed me.

I met Sigal by chance at the central bus station in Jerusalem. As a result of this meeting, she started coming to the pub and became one of my crowd. As I said, I was in a pretty bad mental shape then.

It was only on the way back from the murder site, after the shooting, that some sort of sanity returned to me. I suddenly realized that I'd lost control for months.

The evening when Sigal came to the pub, she said that something should be done. Everyone there agreed that there should be some response. We didn't talk about murder, just about 'something'. We did mention an eye for an eye. They all wanted to back off from the decision that we should do something, but we couldn't. We decided to retaliate.

Around that time, the Jewish Underground and Danni Shmuely were caught. I thought they were guys that had really done something. One of them was a pilot, another a division commander - serious people who'd taken a stand and retaliated.

It was only at the meetings in the pub that I started to think about operations against Arabs. I hadn't been interested in politics beforehand.

We agreed that we needed a weapon, but it wasn't a question of murder. We wanted to inflict harm, to cause alarm, to kidnap someone, but no way were we thinking about murder. We went to the Beit-Lid base where I'd served, to take a weapon from one of the barracks. I went into one of the soldiers' rooms. Three or four soldiers were sleeping there. It was after midnight. There were weapons on the floor, full metal jackets, magazines and hand-grenades, but I didn't take anything. I don't know why. I had a blackout. It was after a long drive, during which I hadn't had a drink or used any drugs. I was sober for the first time in ages, and I suddenly asked myself, "what am I doing? Who am I stealing weapons from?" I left without taking any guns, and told Sigal and Ziv that I couldn't find any.

On the way back, Ziv said he'd give me his personal gun. It was during this trip that the idea of attacking an Arab cab driver started to take shape - an eye for an eye.

It wasn't, as yet, a question of taking someone's life. Two nights after the attempt to take a gun, we decided to act. We agreed that Ziv and Sigal would stop a cab, take the driver to Ma'aleh Edumim and give him a going-over. Our intention was to punch him, destroy his cab, send him to the emergency room, but killing him was never mentioned.

They stood at the French Hill intersection for two hours. I sat in my car and watched them from a distance. It was a rainy night, and only a few cabs were on the streets. After two hours, they walked up to the car and suggested we go to the Arab cab-rank near the Flower Gate. When we got there, Ziv announced that he couldn't sit in the car with the Arab driver. We changed roles. Sigal and I went up to the cab station, got into a car and said that we wanted to go to Ma'aleh Edumim. Before we reached the descent to Ma'aleh Edumim, Sigal put on her act. She said she wasn't feeling well and that she had to throw up. I got out of the car as well, and pulled out my gun from its hiding-place in a bag.

Ziv came to make certain that the driver was an Arab, then drove on. While we were checking the driver's identity, a friend of mine pulled up and asked what was going on. I said everything was OK and he drove off.

Even though I'd been identified, as well as my car, on the site where the attack on the Arab driver was to be made, I didn't stop the plan. In a hazy way, I felt I must go on.

After my friend drove off, and Ziv had driven some 500 yards away, I aimed the gun at the cab driver and shot him in the back of the neck. Even while I was shooting him in the neck, I wasn't thinking about murder. It was clear to me that I meant to kill him, but not consciously clear. As if I were simultaneously in two different states. One - what I wanted to do, and the other - what actually happened. On the one hand, I kept feeling that I shouldn't shoot him, yet on the other hand I

pressed the trigger. During the ride, I still felt unclear about what I would do. Pictures went through my mind of shooting at the tires, or at the car itself, getting the driver out of the car and firing at his legs, or body, but not so as to kill him, just wound him. I even saw scenes where I was shooting at his heart, but didn't identify this as killing a human being.

In the two or three last seconds I was in a blackout. You're surrounded by black. You don't think about anything, apart from the target. Everything around you is clouded and disappears. The alcohol, accumulated fatigue, hashish and missed hours of sleep over a period of months made me lose all my defense mechanisms.

The driver sat in his seat and I was standing outside. I went to the left door and shot the driver three times in the back of his neck, from 2 inches away. With the shots, I woke up. It's like sitting dozing with stereo headphones on and suddenly you hear a boom. Suddenly I saw I was holding a smoking weapon, and running toward the car that was coming to collect me, and trying to create order in the mess inside my head.

The Reasonable Man

When sitting in judgment on a person who killed another, the court addresses itself to the question how a reasonable man would act under similar circumstances.

Who is this "reasonable man" when the case is homicide on cultural and social grounds?

The aim of this chapter is to examine the influence of a person's cultural background and social values on his decision-making process, and in particular the decision to kill. I chose two murder stories, which deal with Arab family honor - the killing of a wife and the killing of a sister. In the Western societies the killing of a sister is almost unheard of on the issue of extra marital sex, and when a man kills his wife, he usually reacts to his personal disgrace. In the traditional Arab society, where family ties are very tight and personal freedom is very limited, homicide is a reaction to the dishonor to the family name, not necessarily the betrayed husband.

Harel (1993) claims that the punishment must be dependant on the victim's role in creating the cause of action. According to this claim, in cases of murder on romantic pretexts, a Bedouin should be treated more leniently than a Jew, because the Bedouin woman is aware of the Bedouin man's sensitivities.

Cultural influence on decision-making is expressed by the decision-maker himself. Ibrahim Abu-Halil says: "The Bedouin doesn't tell anyone about his pain, and he always takes responsibility for himself." All the same, the decisions are made by the big Sheikhs, heads of the families.

Kressel (1981) opposes the concept that the Bedouin takes responsibility for homicide for family honor, and claims that the head of the family and the elder brothers usually give the task to the youngest son. He enumerates twenty-three characteristics of murder for family honor, and stresses that it is the result of premeditation, and is not a spontaneous or emotional reaction. In Kressel's view, the motivation for this kind of murder is not in bowing to loftier values, but an expression of subordination to the structural principles of the stratified system.

There is a Jewish saying: "Make yourself a Rabbi." It means that before reaching a decision, it is wise to take advise from an authority. It also means, that in order to avoid conflict, it is best for a person to decide who the authority is, and then take advise only from him or her.

Research, conducted in the Western world, shows that people usually tend to avoid taking responsibility when faced with negative choices (Tversky & Kahneman, 1986). For instance, people will avoid giving their opinion about which medical treatment they prefer, and leave the decision to their doctors. If they have no one to make the decision for them - a doctor, a rabbi, or a priest - they tend to choose the alternative with the highest level of uncertainty. By doing so they

decrease their responsibility for the results and can attribute any possible failure to the uncertainty factors.

The two stories in this chapter describe some of the tradition and lifestyles in the Arab village and the Bedouin tribe, which are the background for the homicides described here and for others. The social pressure of the Arab street, which is also the result of cultural values, is dominant in its influence on the decision-making process. As opposed to the avoidance of accepting responsibility in Western culture, the two Arab killers take full responsibility for their actions.

Ibrahim Abu-Halil

Like most migrating Bedouins, we lived in tents and made our living from raising sheep. We lived a humble life, no electricity, no radio, no television, no refrigerator. The Bedouin life is very mobile. They want to move from place to place? Just load the tent on the camels and go. No need to pay rent or water and electricity fees when the woman does the cooking over a fire in the tent.

Life in the tent was easier and better than life in a house. There are not too many thoughts in your head and nothing can go wrong.

I miss the tent. A man misses his childhood. I also miss the Bedouin tent-related heritage. Nowadays, the Bedouin live in houses, order cooking gas by telephone and show their children what a camel looks like in the museum.

The Bedouins are difficult people. Their life is physically difficult and in other ways as well. The decisions are made by the Sheikhs - the heads of the families. Most of the simple people, mainly the older ones, have no profession, so they buy some sheep, raise them and make a humble living.

The Bedouin's body is built differently, too. His body is tougher, because he works all the time.

The Bedouin is a clever and quiet man. He does not reveal his pain to others and always takes responsibility for himself.

The Bedouin woman works at home. She helps her husband, raises the children, but does not teach them to read and write. Ten or twenty years ago there were no educated Bedouin women. Now there are more.

A man must be very strict about the woman's honor. The most severe offense in the Bedouin culture is to abuse a woman's honor, and by doing so - the man's as well.

One must not sit with women who are not of one's family. The Muslim religion decrees that if you fornicate with someone's wife, the day will come when someone will do the same to you. Religion forbids men to speak with women, and especially for a man to speak privately with a strange woman.

We learned to subdue our thoughts about women. Satan might make a man do the unthinkable. Bad thoughts must be avoided, so as not to do bad deeds. The prophet Mohammed said, "You must not be alone with a strange woman, even if you are teaching her religion."

Woman's honor is of extreme importance. Who would marry a whore? Only he who has no honor. A girl must beware of men's temptations. She must dress modestly. Islam honors women more than any other religion. Our religion states, for example, that a young woman must accept her arranged husband. In reality, on the other hand, this is not always possible. Since there are more women than men, and since it is our custom not to marry strangers, there are some older women, or not very pretty, who reached the age of thirty, and no one wants to marry them. In such a case she might prefer to be someone's second wife, rather than remain alone. If

she marries an older man, she could have a child and a family. It is very uncommon for a Bedouin woman to remain single.

There are some parents, who marry off their daughter to a rich, old man. This might be in order to hold on to the family's lands and property, but it is forbidden by our religion.

A father who raised his daughter properly, she will never run off with a stranger. If it happens that a young woman runs off with a man that her father or his father did not agree to, he must in no way sleep with her. He must take her to one of the Sheikhs, who will start negotiations. Then a "Sulha" (a peace ceremony) will be held between the two families, and they can marry. Such cases are rare.

The stories about Bedouin young women who ran away are overrated. There are noble tribes among the Bedouins, who are very careful who marries their daughters. In the past, a young woman from a noble tribe would never marry a man from a lesser tribe. Nowadays we are a bit more modern.

When a boy is six-seven years old, his father takes him to sit with the grown men. A little boy catches on quickly. He hears what the elders say and he learns the rules. He understands what is allowed and what is forbidden. He hears stories and grows up into the Bedouin culture.

The custom of murder on the grounds of family honor is an ancient custom. A Bedouin young woman must be a virgin when she marries. The bride must show her mother the bloodstained sheet as proof of her honor.

Bedouin marriages have a certain and clear process. A Bedouin young man sees the young woman he is to marry before the wedding. He might even speak to her, but he will not go out with her and never touch her.

When you turn eighteen, you speak with your parents about your wish to be married to someone's daughter. The young woman never initiates such a step. The parents can object, and sometimes do. If they know that the young woman or her family has a bad reputation, they will object. If they have no objections, they will approach the girl's parents and ask for her.

The matter of a dowry is still customary. There are standards to this. All families take the same thing, cash. Today it is about 2,500 dinars (3,000 dollars). The bride's father buys her gold jewels and clothes with this money. The gold will protect her in the future. If her husband dies or divorces her, it will be her insurance. Apart from that, an agreement is signed at the Sheikh as to the sum of money the man will pay her in case of divorce. It is important for the woman to know that she has financial resources in case of her husband's death or divorce, so that she can keep her honor and not ask people for handouts.

When the boy's parents have met with the girl's parents, and they had no objections, the father goes to ask his daughter's opinion. It is not true that young women are forced to marry against their will. The young woman knew the intentions beforehand. The young man's mother had already spoken to the girl's mother behind the scenes, and there is an unwritten agreement. Mothers are the quiet diplomats of the Bedouin. The father makes the decisions, but the mother arranges everything.

If the girl's parents consent, an agreement between the parents is signed. The "Fatha" - a chapter from the Koran that symbolizes engagement - is read in the presence of the Kadi and two witnesses, and only then does the boy meet the young woman in the presence of both their mothers to plan their wedding.

The couple will not meet on their own until the wedding day. It might happen that one of the mothers will be present and not listen, but it is important that there is no physical contact between them, because it is hard to tell today what goes through a person's mind. If they went out together before the wedding, and then he decided to leave her, it would jeopardize her honor and no other man would want to marry her. That is why it is important that they not be alone together until the wedding night.

Nowadays, many Bedouin women go to high-school and university, but this does not mean that they fall in love with Jews. Their brain is built like that, just like a man will not fall in love with another man, or like a woman will not fall in love with a married man, a Bedouin woman will never fall for a non-Muslim man.

Marriage was made to protect a person's honor. If there was no marriage, and everyone slept with whoever they fancied, no one would know who his mother was or who his father was. People would be like dogs.

Religion protects our honor. Anything forbidden stems from religion. If people would keep the real religion, instead of the fake one, the world would be peaceful and untroubled. There need not have been jails. If I were a legislator, I would go by religion. A man who rapes or sleeps with another woman, if he is married, he should be stoned to death. Of course, irrefutable proof is required. A man who rapes a woman should be sentenced to death.

Our religion says that if a man steals, his hand should be chopped off in front of his whole tribe. A man would think twice before committing a theft, if that were the punishment. Two years in jail do not deter as much as chopping off a hand.

Someone who imports narcotics, if you kill him, you preserve society and prevent the deaths of others. If there was a death penalty for narcotics, instead of short terms of imprisonment, there would be no drug addicts.

The wedding is an impressive ceremony. Two big tents are erected, one for men and one for women. Sheep are slaughtered and roasted over fires. This is all done by the groom's family. The groom's friends and tribe members each contribute a sheep or a sack of rice. The wedding goes on for a week. People meet in the tent and talk. It is not customary to send out written invitations, in order not to embarrass those who cannot afford a proper gift. No one comes empty handed. After the wedding the husband puts up a tent (today it's a house), and the couple live there.

A year after I finished school with flying colors and got my high-school diploma, I married my cousin and planned to be a teacher. A year after our marriage, when I was twenty years old, it happened.

One day I came home and found a strange man from my tribe there. She admitted that she had been unfaithful. There was shouting and she went to her parents' house.

The moment she admitted it, I knew I had to settle the account with her. It would not have satisfied me if she ran away from the village. If she had tried to cross the border, I would have tried to stop her.

It is not a question of her life, but of your honor that was violated. You cannot walk down the street. Everyone talks about you. Here is the guy whose wife betrayed him. All the Sheikhs discuss it. You begin to feel this pressure in your head. There is no relief. Your family members act as if they were in mourning. You see the entire village talking only about you. The most severe thing with Bedouins is when a woman's honor is damaged.

The State of Israel is forty years old, and will be around another forty years, and then maybe another country will rule here. Bedouin family honor always was and always will be, no matter if we live in houses or in tents. It is forever. It is a man's honor. There is no sense to a man's life without honor. He is like an animal.

I knew I had to kill her. If I hadn't done it and she had stayed in the tribe, I would have been an unfit person. I would not have been treated with respect. Killing the treacherous woman erases the damage to the honor of her husband and family, and it was important to me to do the deed myself. In such a situation, you must cleanse yourself, as you were taught, to preserve the family honor.

From the minute I saw that man in my house and until a week later, I don't remember much. I wandered around in a daze. I heard people telling me that some years ago there was such and such a case, and the Sheikhs did so and so. The situation was very pressured. The hardest thing is that something so sudden and unexpected happened to you. The situation I was in was not clear to me.

About a week after it happened, I reached the conclusion that I had to kill her. I didn't think for a moment that I had to kill him. The young woman is to blame. The man is like a dog. If you call him, he comes, if you send him away, he goes. I consulted no one. I knew I had to finish her off. Bedouins are gentle people, but hard. Where family is concerned, the Bedouin is very sensitive and gentle, but finds it hard to forgive.

A month later I took a knife from the kitchen and went to her parents' house. I knew she was home alone with her mother. Her brother was at work outside the tribe. I entered their home at six o'clock in the morning. She was baking pita-bread over the fire, and stood with her back to me. She didn't see me and I didn't say a word to her. I stabbed her two-three times and she fell down, dead.

I felt nothing at that moment. I don't remember if I was under stress or calm. I am sure I knew exactly what I was doing, but now it seems blurred.

Afterwards I felt a great sense of relief.

Today I know of women in the village who are unfaithful to their husbands. They know it too, but do not kill them. I despise them. I despise any man who has no honor. If a tree has one rotten branch, the branch must be cut off or it will poison

the entire tree. It is better to discard one rotten tomato, than have the whole crate of tomatoes rot. It is preferable to kill one woman for society, than to have the whole community killed. Any man, Jewish or Arab, if he came home and found his wife with another man, he would kill her in his heart. Some Jews would actually kill her, and some, out of fear of the law and prison, might not kill her, but deep down in their hearts they would want her dead.

Saliman Abu-Musa

From a religious point of view my family was traditional. The parents prayed, but we children did not continue to do so. We observed the rules of Islam. Neither alcohol nor pork were to be found in the house, but we would not beat someone for drinking beer outside the house. We were not extreme.

I finished high-school, got my diploma, and started to study bookkeeping in Be'er-Sheva. During the day I worked in a factory. I studied and worked with Jews and our relationships were fine. I was considered an excellent worker, and the management decided to send me to France to learn how to operate a new machine.

One of my sisters was married to someone in another village. It was an arranged marriage. Nowadays most marriages are love matches, but there were less in the past. The marriage did not work out. There was talk in our family that her father-in-law was involved with narcotics - dealing and using. He tried to rape my sister, and convinced his son to go into business with him and to turn my sister into a whore. He was crafty and smart, a criminal mind. He spent many years in jail for dealing in drugs.

When he saw that things were not going his way, he pressured his son to divorce my sister. They had been married for less than a year and there were no children. When the arguments between them started, they went to the Sharii religious court, where it was decided that she should live with her husband on a separate floor from his parents.

The father wanted to get out of the divorce business with his honor intact, so he brought a friend of his, a criminal like himself, to my sister's apartment, closed the door, and called all the neighbors to witness the fact that my sister was, allegedly, seeing other men. This is a valid and accepted reason for divorce in the religious courts.

My sister claimed that it was all contrived, and filed a complaint with the police. The police arrested her husband, his father and the friend, and my sister was put in a shelter for her own safety. The police feared that my family would harm her, and asked my father and other elders to sign an agreement not to do so. The religious court confirmed the divorce, and my sister moved back with us. I remember that my father gathered all of us, told us that he had signed a document that no harm would come to my sister, and told us not to do anything foolish.

Much later, when I was being held by the police, I met some drug dealers who were acquainted with my sister's husband's family. They told me that my sister's version of the story was true, and that the strange man in her apartment was indeed her father-in-law's best friend.

When my sister moved back with us, we didn't believe her version. We felt humiliated in the village. You feel it in people's stares, in their eyes. Any two people

talking together seem to be pointing at you. You feel pitiful and oppressed. You are deprived of your male identity and of your honor.

I had many friends in the village. We played cards, ate, drank, and had a good time. Once, when I was at a friend's house, his father wanted to hear what exactly had happened. I burst into tears. I noticed his son and other friends signaling him with their eyes not to pressure me because "he is sensitive." This insulted me.

I felt as if our family had lost face because we did nothing. We were expected to act. We were expected to kill her. A woman's honor always comes back to her family. I felt very badly. We were all brought up to see this as unacceptable. It is not mentioned in school, but we were taught this at home. It was spoken of in a roundabout manner since childhood. In high-school, in sociology class, we discussed tribal culture and values. Among other things we spoke of family honor and blood revenge. Everyone suggested solutions. Some justified blood revenge over family honor, and others had different solutions, such as to marry off the woman to an old man, where she will be a servant, or to lock her up in the house. We spoke about the subject openly in school and argued.

I didn't mention these discussions at home. School was school and home was home. They were two different worlds to me.

All the brothers in my family were on excellent terms. We loved one another, but when my sister moved back, this love turned to hate.

When I was on the street or with my friends, I was not the same Saliman as before. I was very closed. At one stage I wanted to pour kerosene over the house and burn it down with the entire family, including my parents, my sister and myself, and erase any trace of our family. Family honor was very important to me.

I told myself that the obligation to maintain the family honor is first of all the father's or the eldest brother's. That is how I tried to console myself for not doing anything.

One day I was supposed to work the second shift at the factory. At noon I went into the kitchen to get my food for work. My sister was there alone. We had an argument. She wanted to go out somewhere outside the village, and I forbade it. I didn't want her going out after what had happened. There was a silent decision in the family that she should not go out. I insisted she stay, and she insisted that she wanted to go.

There was no one at home when the argument started. I had to go to work, and the argument became very loud. All my pent up anger and the feeling that she was to blame for all that had happened to the family burst out.

There was a knife on the kitchen counter, and I stabbed her nineteen times. I only remember the first stab. I woke up only when I saw the blood. I wanted to run away from the place and from reality.

According to Arab tradition and folklore, family honor should be carried out in a way that whoever kills the offender should soak up some blood with a piece of cloth, go out into the street and wave the cloth like a flag. It is a symbol of cleansing

the family honor. He will be proud of his deed and everyone will be proud of him. I didn't do it. I wasn't thinking of pride.

When the topic was far from me, my viewpoint was different. When something is far from your own flesh, it seems easy. I was prepared to be a bit modern, close her up in the house, or something. I didn't think it was such a big deal. It seemed exaggerated. But when it happened in my family, to my own flesh and blood, I knew I had been wrong in my thoughts. There was no room for being modern. I could not stick to the theoretical thoughts I had on the subject.

There is an Arabic saying, similar to a Hebrew one: "Do not judge your neighbor until you are in his place." When something happens to you, it is all different. All you read in books or learned at school is forgotten.

Even today, when I know that my sister's version was true, I am not sorry that she is dead. Our family honor was violated, no matter if the story was contrived or not. All the same, the price of life imprisonment is terrible. Nevertheless, if something like that happened again, God forbid, I would have to act the same way.

If someone told me a similar story and asked me what to do, I would tell him that he must kill her, but that he should try to avoid life imprisonment. The custom of preserving family honor will go on forever.

I would have been happier if she had been killed in a road accident. My need was not to kill her, as much as to bring the dishonor of my family to an end. A man is not an island. You live with people with certain accepted values and relationships. The fact is that people pointed a finger at me because my sister dishonored the family, and I did nothing to redeem this honor.

If a similar thing happened to a Jew, and he could live with it without disrupting his life, I don't think he should act like I did. But if it happened to an Arab, even if his neighbors consoled him and convinced him not to do what I did, he would know deep down in his heart that he had to act as I did.

The topic of family honor includes two basic issues. The first is our religion - Islam. Our religion sanctions murder for family honor. According to Islam you can take someone's life only in three cases: a married woman who had sex with another man, a person who killed a relative for no reason, and a Muslim who converted to another religion.

The second issue is Arab morals and values. In Arab culture there is no forgiveness for dishonoring the family.

There is a tape, originally from Egypt, which is well known in every Arab village. The name of the story is "Shafika and Mathwali," brother and sister. The story starts with the brother joining the army, leaving his sister with their old father. He comes home on leave once a year. One day he slapped another soldier, who reacted by saying, "Do you think you are a man? Have you forgotten what you have at home? Go see to your honor." He showed him a newspaper clipping that said that his sister was a whore.

The soldier requested special leave and returned home. His old father received him warmly, but he pushed him away and asked, "Where is Shafika?" The

father didn't want to tell him, because he knew the son would kill her, so he said, "After you joined the army, your sister became ill and died." The son did not believe him, and said, "Show me her grave." The old man cried and said, "Listen, my son, I am old and have no strength to control my household. Your sister disobeyed me and left home."

The brother was furious and looked for her. He found her, discovered that she was indeed a whore, and stabbed her to death.

The judge asked him, "Why did you kill Shafika?" He answered, "Your honor, our family was like a tree with one rotten branch. What is your opinion, should I have cut it off or left it to rot?" The judge agreed that it was preferable to cut it off, and added, "By law, the minimal sentence for what you did is six months. I sentence you to six months in jail with pain and sorrow, for taking the law into your own hands."

This tape is very popular in the Arab sector. People listen to it at home and in coffee houses. The owner plays the tape, and people sit and listen. Sometimes he plays the tapes over and over again.

Escalation

Homicide is usually the end result of a process of escalation between two people, which began as a minor quarrel and developed to a violent finale. Theoretically, there is no difference between a personal dispute, or a dispute between countries, groups, classes or tribes, mainly if the decision-makers are dominant.

The escalation process of hostilities is characteristic of homicides committed in the criminal underworld, but can also be found in neighbors' disputes, family quarrels and work relations.

When one has invested in hate, one does not easily yield the investment. The "Sunk Cost Effect" states, that the greater the investment in a certain project, the greater is the commitment to continue it, even at a loss. Arkes & Blumer (1985) and Northcraft & Wolf (1984) report many cases to verify this phenomenon. The behavior of stock market investors or of casino gamblers is an example of the Sunk Cost Effect. When people lose money, they refuse to quit, because it would be at a loss. So they continue gambling, and if their stock goes down, that is certainly no reason to sell it. The more the stock falls, so does the tendency not to sell rise. The more a gambler loses money, so does his tendency to bet higher stakes increase, in order to win back some of his losses (Yassour, 1984).

Certain wars, such as the Vietnam war or the Israeli war in Lebanon, go on for a long period of time, and deteriorate the more casualties there are. The growing need to justify the high number of casualties demands an impressive victory, which means continuation of the war, more casualties, and so on.

Wars of attrition end and business failures close down when the leadership changes, and the new leadership are no longer committed to a process which it did not start, or as the result of third-party arbitration.

The role of the arbitrator in disputes is crucial. The arbitrator must be a well-known public figure, respected by both parties. The disputing parties would not concede to each other, but might do so to an arbitrator, who helps them solve the issue with their honor intact. Religious figures and family elders, as well as social workers, police officers and retired judges, are very suitable to the role of arbitrator between disputing parties. It will be easier for the parties to get off their high horses, if the arbitrator intervenes as early as possible.

Many homicide stories, and mainly criminal underworld killings, as described in this chapter, are reminiscent of disputes between countries, which escalate to wars that no one wanted. Maoz (1990) states, that "nations get into confrontations because they believe they can control the course as well as the consequences of their actions. However, once a crisis is under way, it turns out that both parties lose control, not only over their opponents' actions, but over their own as well." This is as true of organizations and people, as it is of countries.

This chapter tells the stories of two criminals, who chose a road that had to end, sooner or later, in murder. The stories describe gang relationships, the decision-making processes of the individual and the group, and the escalation to the bitter end.

Boaz Shitrit

In the fourth grade, when I switched to a new religious school, the other pupils brought me a broom and told me that the king of the class decided that I had to clean the classroom. I refused, so an argument started, and he finally told me that we would meet outside at the end of the day. We met after school and he surprised me with a punch. We started to fight, I pushed his head into a puddle of water and shouted at him to surrender. He surrendered and the fight was over. The next day he said that he had beat me.

One day a criminal called "Shlomo the thief" went by the school. All the kids said in fear, "Wow, there is Shlomo the thief." He annoyed all sorts of people and everyone was afraid of him. I noticed the fear, and decided to seek his company. I asked my mother for the money she sometimes gave me as pocket-money. I went to him with money, and told him that I occasionally found money and that I had nothing to do with it. He was happy to accept the money, and then I told him that I was ostracized by my class mates and not included in their games. He came to school with me, and all the pupils started to fear me too. He arranged for me to play soccer with all the kids, and I got a reputation, "Boaz is with Shlomo the thief."

In the seventh grade I went to a vocational school, in which most of the pupils were from the fringes of society or delinquents. When we went on a trip to Eilat (a resort town) in the ninth grade, I had no money. A good friend of mine, who also had no money, suggested we steal money from a grocery store. He would come from the back, push over crates and break bottles, and when the owner ran out back to see what was happening, I would come in the front door, open the cash register and take the money. I was apprehensive at first, but he convinced me that there would be no problem.

He went wild in the back and broke all the crates. The owner ran to him, and I went into the store and took six dollars in coins. There were bills there, but I didn't touch them, because I was afraid he would notice that money had been stolen from the cash register. We went to Eilat with more money than all the other kids, and had fun.

We repeated our method a number of times, and then discovered that some of the owners left the keys in the door. We would come to the store, remove the key without the owner noticing, duplicate the key in a nearby shop, and return the key to the lock. We would go back to the store on Friday night, unlock it and steal merchandise. This went on for a year and a half. The police suspected me of these and other breaking and entering jobs, but they had no proof.

At this stage gangs started to form in Givat-Olga. These were gangs of criminals, which committed thefts and other crimes. There were rivalry and even violence between the gangs. At first I belonged to a group my own age, but when I saw that part of the stolen goods kept disappearing and that they were disloyal, I left them.

I switched to a different gang, in which the members were older than I. I had already realized that I was a delinquent, and wanted to be a serious one. A serious criminal gets respect. Respect was very important to me. I would go to a club, get a good table, a special waiter, free entry and so on. A regular person could wait two hours before the waitress looked his way.

I had a girlfriend who was still in high-school, and I loved her very much. Fierce love. She knew I was a criminal, and said she would go out with me only if I quit crime. I promised her I would quit, but I didn't.

I continued as a member of our gang, which was in control of the hashish trade, stolen goods and gold. People paid us for hashish in gold. The hashish came from Bedouins in the south, via drug dealers in Jaffa and Beer-Sheva. We collected the gold and sold it to an Arab dealer.

One of our gang members broke into a jeweler's with someone called Shlomi. They took two kilos (4 lbs.) of gold and hid it. The next day my friend found out that Shlomi had taken the gold, but denied it. A few days later, the Arab dealer told us that Shlomi had indeed offered him two kilos of gold for sale. We approached him, and he again denied the story. We could not forgive him for abusing our trust, and decided to murder him.

I was sixteen years old at the time. At that age, in an environment of crime, you do not think twice about murdering someone for abuse of trust. Naturally, we discussed the murder beforehand, whether we were capable of doing it, whether we could withstand police interrogation, and other questions.

My friend wanted to kill Shlomi over the gold, but I hated him before that, because he was the first one to bring hard narcotics into Givat-Olga. At the time, I went to see him with a friend, and pressured him to take the hard drugs out of town, because we were afraid the whole detective force of the police would show up in Givat-Olga. He refused. I brought a gun that I had hidden, went into his house, called him out to the staircase, and took out my gun and loaded it.

I got the gun from a hashish buyer, who had no money and paid me with it. We had other guns too. We did not want to sell the guns to the Arab dealer. We were afraid he would pass them onto terrorists, and we were afraid that it would bring the Shabac (General Secret Services) into the picture.

Shlomi came out of his apartment. I aimed the gun at him and threatened him that if he didn't get rid of the heroin immediately, he would get a bullet in the head. He said that he had to go to Jaffa to sell the heroin back, and that he didn't have a car. I said to him, "I don't care. Call a taxi and leave now."

It was Friday night. He called a taxi and returned the heroin to the dealer he had bought it from.

Afterwards, I saw him on the street a number of times, but we had no dealings. We once sent someone to buy hard drugs from him, and learned that he had not brought heroin back to town.

Over the years, certain norms were created in our society by which abuse of trust and informing were not forgiven. Whoever abused a person's trust or informed on him to the police, his verdict was clear.

At this time, I had several police records for violence. I was a hothead and very brave. In one case, as I was leaving a discotheque, some guy called me an asshole. I immediately pulled out my switchblade, and gave him seventeen cuts all over his body. I was tried for attempted murder and causing severe bodily harm, but not sentenced to jail.

In another case, someone cursed a friend of mine at a folk-dancing evening. I took the beer bottle I was drinking from, and broke it over his head. His head was badly hurt. This time I also got a suspended sentence.

In no case would I kill an innocent man. There was a previous occasion, in which my partner's young brother was beaten up by someone, whose brother Yoav was one of the biggest criminals in Givat-Olga. When I found out, I beat him up. He shouted at me, "I will bring you my brother!" I said to him, "If you bring your brother, he'll get a bullet in the head." I was sure he would come, but I wasn't afraid to confront him, because I was a member of a gang and I knew they would not abandon me. When Yoav found out that I had threatened to shoot him if he came near me, he planned to harm me. One evening, when my friends and I were in a billiards club, he came into the club wearing a mask and carrying an Uzi, and started shooting at me. One bullet hit me in the leg. He escaped.

I began planning his murder. I lay in a wait for him, but he avoided me. He knew I would not be silent. He spent every night in a different place, but I knew that he had dinner at his parents' house on Friday nights.

One Friday night I set up an ambush in front of his parents' house. All the big crimes take place on Friday night. He came out, but had his baby son in his arms. I decided to postpone the matter, because I was afraid to hit the baby. I planned to get him next week, but in the meantime he was arrested by the police for the shooting at the billiards club.

Someone we knew from a Jerusalem gang was in jail with Yoav. We asked him to cut Yoav's face and tell him not to mess with me anymore. During the struggle someone else was hurt. Yoav understood that the reason for the attempt to cut his face was his story with me, so then he sent a messenger to me and promised to compensate me with gold.

I and my gang were planning the murder of Shlomi, who had embezzled the gold. We decided to strangle him, in order to avoid noise. We prepared a grave for him in the town garbage dump.

Shlomi had gang members who escorted him around regularly. We did not want to harm them, and followed him around for a month, trying to catch him alone. Finally, we decided to abduct one of his bodyguards, Danni, and to beat him until he promised not to escort Shlomi any longer.

Two members of my gang bumped into Danni, who was a juvenile delinquent, and tried to get him into their car. They intended to beat him up and scare him into keeping away from Shlomi. He resisted and managed to get away, while shouting that he would get his revenge.

The next evening we were all at the home of one of our gang. We heard some shots downstairs, but saw no one.

On Friday afternoon we were playing soccer in the neighborhood and Danni approached me and asked to speak with me. He said that he had shot at my friends, because they had tried to abduct him and hurt him. While we were speaking, we were joined by the friend, whose car had been shot at. When I told him that Danni was the one who shot at him, he slapped him and shouted at him.

We met with the leader of our gang and decided to set a trap for Danni, take away his weapon, beat him, and warn him that we would forgive the shooting only if he left Shlomi. We did not intend to kill him, just hurt him, and find out through him where Shlomi had hid the rest of the gold.

The decision to kill Shlomi, on the other hand, was still valid.

Our gang leader arranged a meeting with Danni for Saturday night. We ambushed him with a gun, to scare him, and handcuffs, to tie him up with and scare him. We caught him, hand cuffed him, and led him at a gun point to the garbage dump. We showed him the hole we had dug for Shlomi, and threatened him that if he didn't tell us where the gold was, we would kill him too.

At the hole we tried to scare him. One of my friends jumped on him and strangled him with a thin chain, to scare him and make him talk. I helped by holding Danni's legs. During the struggle, Danni began choking. We realized that we could not revive him and that it was a lost case. There was no choice but to kill him. One of us picked up a large stone and hit Danni over the head with it a number of times. He shouted at us, "You do something too!" I and the third partner picked up stones, threw them at Danni and hit his head and back. We put him into the hole and covered him up. We found the carcass of a dead cat, put it over the grave to cover the smell, and went home.

David Amar

All my brothers, including myself, were treated well and brought up properly by the family, mainly by Mother. Fathers in immigrant families from Morocco were less dominant. The transition from an all powerful man in Morocco to someone who can barely support his family was very traumatic for the men. In Morocco the woman was dependant on the man, but in Israel women earned a living more easily, by not standing upon their honor and taking cleaning work and other simple jobs. As a result, their position was strengthened and the fathers' position weakened. Some of the fathers found comfort in alcohol, some in cards and others in crime.

I had almost no proper schooling, although I attended school until the age of twelve. From an early age I stole bicycles, fruit from the orchard, pigeons, and stuff that a lot of kids steal. We, the kids from the poor neighborhoods, who are not "good kids," got police records for this. The kids from the nice neighborhoods did not get police records for similar thefts.

Yes, I definitely think that there is socioeconomic, racial and class discrimination in this country. Every topic finally boils down to the issue of Ashkenazi (of Western origin) or Sephardi (of Eastern origin). There is the Civil Rights Movement, but they are more concerned with Palestinians or people of interest to the media, such as homosexuals, conscientious objectors, and so on. They do not deal with criminal prisoners or fight for their rights. They have civil rights activists in the occupied territories, but they have nothing on this side of the Green Line (separating the West Bank from Israel).

I had police records for theft from an early age. All the kids in our neighborhood had records. It was not about theft of gold or property, but petty theft from shops. Once, in summer camp, when we were taking paints and brushes from an opposing team, we found a suitcase with a wallet of one of the instructors in it. The wallet was full of fifty lira (\$20) notes. And what did I do? Instead of taking the wallet, I just removed one note from the middle, and put it back. For years I agonized over not taking the entire wallet.

In poor neighborhoods you grow up in an atmosphere of force. You live by your sword. I carried a knife from the age of ten and a gun from the age of sixteen. It was for show more than for use. There is no leisure culture, no community center, no swimming pool, no evening classes, no youth movement, nothing. It is difficult to find some privacy in a 600 square foot apartment, shared by ten people. Life naturally takes place outside. Boys congregate in gangs, build temporary shacks, and spend most of their time there.

In such a situation, crime comes naturally, although this is a generalization. In fact, not one of my brothers, and we all grew up together, became a criminal. One of the things that harmed me most was the decision of the social services in

our town to exempt me from school at the age of twelve. The actual significance of this decision was to bar me from school and clear the road to a life of crime.

I had charisma and leadership qualities from an early age. Once, in one of the many institutions I passed through in my young life, I decided to shave my head. Some kids copied me and did the same, but I got expelled. I led the group in many pranks when I was a boy, and in many crimes as I grew older.

Until the age of seventeen my actions could be regarded more as high spirits than as a way of life. At seventeen, I was sentenced to two months in Tel-Mond juvenile prison for use of hashish. I found out there that I didn't like the criminal mentality. They were very mediocre, even primitive. I decided that I wanted out of the criminal magic circle, and that called for drastic measures - not going back to my hometown. I decided to join the army, something that was unpopular in our environment, and asked to enroll, but was rejected due to my police record.

I was very disappointed by this rejection, and soon enough found myself in the midst of the crime circle in town.

During my stay at the juvenile prison I turned from amateur into professional. Crime became a way of life for me, not just a way to express my boyish high spirits.

I started dealing in hashish. To this day I am against hard narcotics, but I am for hashish, like alcohol. A hashish user is even better than an alcoholic. Alcoholics have attacks, and would do anything to get hold of alcohol, which they drink all day. Alcohol controls you. On the other hand, you control hashish.

I purchased the hashish from people I had met in jail, and later directly from the Bedouins in El-Arish and Han-Yunes (in the Gaza strip). At first I sold it to people in our town and in the neighboring Kiryat-Shmona, and at a later stage I had friends working for me selling hashish at various points all over the Galilee. When I became an important dealer, about a year after my release from jail, I sold to dealers in Haifa and Tel-Aviv.

Although I handled a lot of money, I didn't enjoy it. I had commitments to prisoners who were still in jail and to other friends. For instance, I financed lawyer fees for some people I knew and helped the wives of others.

In addition to dealing in drugs, I also took part in robberies and other violent incidents with other criminals. I got picked up by the police once a month, but except for one indictment, for which I was not convicted, I was never arrested. I was a regular police target. The police harassed me on an everyday basis and didn't let me breathe.

When I was nineteen years old, hard narcotics reached my own town Hazor. I vetoed dealing in hard drugs. I already had a reputation in the area and in the entire country, and personally warned people who tried to sell it in Hazor.

Before I was arrested, we were a group of friends who grew up together, smoked hashish together and committed some crimes together. When I was released from jail, I hooked up with criminals of a higher caliber. There was a certain rift between me and some people who were with me, and a different group of criminals in town. We were dominant, and the other group members were wary of us.

At a certain stage I heard that some members of the other group had started dealing in hard narcotics. One of them, Reuven, who used to be a friend of mine, was prominent in that group. I had known him since childhood, and allowed myself to insult him whenever we met. The worst insult was when I addressed him in the feminine tense.

I had to put him in his place, after he had suddenly decided to lift his head up.

The people with him tried to play on his male ego, told him that he had to react, and wondered to his face how he could accept such insults.

At this stage he tried to kill me. The first time, he ambushed me near a friend's apartment, broke down the door wearing a mask and tried to shoot me. He didn't manage to hit me because I was experienced and had strong nerves. I chased him, but he got away. I lay in wait for him outside his house a few times. I intended to hurt him and warn him, but I didn't find him. He knew I was watching for him, so he hid.

One Friday he waited for me outside my parents' house. When I came out with a friend, he fired a number of rounds from an Uzi from a roof across the street. I was hit by five bullets and quite badly injured. My friend was hit in the penis, and some passers-by were also injured.

Everyone in town knew what had happened, and what would happen in reaction, but the police just sat there and waited for the killings.

I ran away from the hospital on the first night. I was afraid to stay there, because it was clear to me that Reuven knew I was going to settle the score with him, and that he would try to finish me off before I got the chance.

It was clear to me that I had to hurt him at least as badly as he hurt me, if not more. If I didn't react, he would continue trying, and eventually succeed in killing me.

My group gave him a death verdict. Unilaterally. Not one suggested a lesser punishment. If anyone had, he would have been considered a coward.

In my heart, I hoped the police would apprehend him and punish him, but they did nothing. The police wanted me to get into trouble. When they interrogated us in the hospital, we said that the shooting was an Arab terrorist act, and that we were not involved with anyone. This was the criminal world code. If I had accused into the police, they would have had no problem convicting him for attempted murder. He himself would have confessed if pressured by the police.

My friends and I met to decide what to do. Each of us tried to be more extreme than the next and to display our manliness. We had to make sure that he was the one that had shot at us, and to do so we had to grab him or one of his friends and make them confess. As I was injured, my friends had to do it. They tried to ambush him in various places, but he disappeared every night. He was very frightened, and fear is a very strong cause for crazy action.

I was recuperating in my parents' home, but went to the hospital every day for treatment. My parents lived on the ground floor, and I was afraid he would come there, throw a grenade into the apartment, and hurt me, my parents or my younger

brothers. When my friend was released from the hospital, he came to see me and told me that Reuven had met him and laughed at him, "I heard your penis was hurt," he said to him, "can you have an erection? Will you be able to have children?" I was terribly upset that he dared taunt him.

The town has a small commercial center with a few stores and a restaurant where people used to meet. We went to the center together. We were having a cup of tea in the restaurant, when Reuven came in with ten of his friends. His gang had grown since the shooting. He had become a big hero, someone who had shot and hurt the unchallenged leader of the town.

When there is a struggle between two criminal gangs, there are always some criminals who remain neutral, not identified with either gang. After a case like this, they join up with the gang that is considered stronger.

We were sitting in the restaurant drinking tea, and in comes Reuven. I left the restaurant in order to avoid a quarrel in broad daylight and reveal my intentions. I had to keep my wits. Reuven followed me outside, and said, "They haven't been selling hashish in town for a number of days, and the clients are disappearing, so I am going to start selling here." What he meant to say was that he was taking my territory, as if he deserved a dividend for shooting me and for my lack of reaction.

"The selling point here is mine!" I said, "Whoever sells here will get into trouble with me."

He treated me with contempt. It was the same feeling as if you were sitting somewhere with your wife, and someone comes along and says that he is taking her away, while you are not a factor to be taken seriously.

I took the empty glass, and while talking to him, surprised him with blows to the face, teeth and head. He fell and I continued kicking and beating him. I hurt him very badly, and he was severely injured.

Meir, the friend who was with me when I was shot, came out from the restaurant, and tried to prevent me from hurting Reuven, who was lying on the ground begging for his life. Meir was afraid I would kill Reuven. He acted like a sissy, and I remember wondering how a man who was injured in his penis, whose manhood was hurt and who could be asked embarrassing questions, could feel sorry for the man who had caused him all this.

During the talk outside, before I beat him, Reuven insulted and humiliated me. This was expressed in his body language, his gestures and his insulting words. He was a big, strong guy, and I was afraid that in my inferior physical condition, weak from the injury and the antibiotics, the result of my attacking him could easily be 2:0 in his favor, rather than 1:1, and then I would really be humiliated.

Because he had hurt me, and continued doing so, I attacked him with the glass. When he was down on the ground, hurt and beaten, he began begging for his life. He was sure I was going to kill him. He cried, "Stop, don't kill me. I beg you. I am garbage, I am worthless, I ask your forgiveness." I spit on him and left him lying there.

I felt satisfaction. He was hurt and humiliated, and I had reclaimed my honor, especially as it was done in front of all his friends. All the same, I knew he was still

out to get me. I carried a gun and slept with one, but did not intend to initiate anything against him independently. My friends still tried to ambush him in all sorts of places, and meant to harm him. They carried guns, too, and the intention was to injure or cripple him. The possibility that he would be killed was a real one. It depended upon who did the job.

Sometimes someone accepts the mission to kill someone, but deliberately only wounds him. He claims that he tried to kill him, but failed, when, in fact, he balked at actually killing.

When I recovered from my injuries, I took to wandering around at night with a weapon, lying in wait for him. After a while I ran out of money, I was exhausted and fed up with the situation.

I went abroad to visit friends, to be in a safe place and give matters a chance to cool down. I also thought that if he knew I was out of the country, he would come out of hiding, and then my friends could hit him.

One day, about four months after I left, I telephoned one of the people who had committed to killing him. He told me in code language that Reuven had returned to town that he was sorry about what had happened, and that he wanted to make peace.

I realized that my friends had "chickened out." I was afraid that my credibility would be damaged when I returned and he was unharmed, so I decided to return and sort things out.

In order to forgive him, I would have to be openly pressured by friends. People had to intervene and see to it that he asked my pardon and agreed to pay compensation, and then I could give in and be prepared to forgive him. I was dying for this to happen. If no such pressure is made, and you give in anyway, you are perceived as a coward, and in any future quarrels people will treat you with contempt and lack of fear. This was very important to me, because one of the local papers had published some articles about me and the attempt on my life, which made me look like a coward. This only enhanced the need not to give in to Reuven, unless great and visible pressure was put on me.

A few weeks after I returned to the country, Reuven called and asked to meet me. Afterwards, we met regularly and even worked together, after I appointed him as my foreman.

Despite our relationship, which seemed reasonable, I was still afraid he was trying to harm me, and he probably felt the same way about me, something like "respect him but suspect him."

He tried to provoke me with all sorts of little sentences, and the worst was when he described how he had tried to kill me a number of times in the past, and was prevented each time by technical reasons. It was like he was hinting that I was alive because of luck, not because I was wiser or braver.

I consulted my friend Dubi and we decided to check whether Reuven had really broken his ties with his old gang. He spoke badly of them, and we knew that if he was still seeing them, he was untrustworthy and unreliable.

We followed him in disguise and found that he met his friends clandestinely, and not chance meetings but planned ones. It was clear to us that they were meeting to plan my end, and that he was passing on information about my whereabouts. We followed some of the men. One of them was a slippery character from Tiberias called Max, but we could not discover exactly where he lived. We followed him to his neighborhood a number of times, but lost him there. Dubi and I climbed a hill nearby, and for a few days spied on all the cars coming and going. At night, with an infrared night-vision telescope we studied the houses in the neighborhood.

One night we spotted Max in one of the apartments. We watched the apartment, and a few days later saw Reuven go in there and hug and kiss Max. This was the complete opposite to Reuven's usual behavior, which was to badmouth Max and suggest going after him.

I was supposed to meet Reuven two hours later on business. I decided to give him a chance to admit he saw Max occasionally. When we met, I started talking about Max, to see his reaction, and by the way to ask him when he had seen him last. He said that there was rumor that Max had gone abroad and badmouthed him again.

At that moment I decided to kill him. I returned to Dubi, who had stayed on the hill, and told him about our conversation. Half an hour later we saw Reuven arrive at Max's apartment, and understood that he was reporting our meeting to him.

At the time, having been saved from so many attempts on my life, I decided to be more religious. I prayed, kept the Sabbath, ate only kosher food and gave to charity. I lived with the feeling that God was watching over me. As a result of this, I gave a lot of thought to the killing of Reuven. I consulted Rabbis, making up stories about friends in similar situations, and searched for a religious ruling which would tell me that killing in self-defense was permissible. I decided that the saying "if anyone comes to kill you, kill him first" was appropriate to my situation, because they were out to get me.

We went to look for a place to kill him. The means could be a shot, a knife, explosives or any other way. The place had to be isolated, so no one would hear the noise; familiar, so we would not get lost; and a place where we would be able to bury Reuven without his body being discovered.

We found a place like that near the Golani junction, in a hilly area full of apple groves.

I telephoned Reuven, and told him that we had a meeting with a serious drug dealer from Nazareth, and we arranged for him to pick me up in his car. Criminals find it easier to pick someone up in their car, rather than get into someone else's car. They feel much safer that way.

At night, we drove to the meeting place, where Dubi, according to the plan, was supposed to be waiting with a weapon. We arrived, parked the car in a hidden place, and walked toward the grove. Then Dubi jumped on Reuven and started strangling him. I held his legs. He fought, managed to get loose and tried to

escape. We caught him, and I removed his shoes and belt, to make it harder for him to escape again. I held Reuven, and Dubi strangled him until he stopped resisting.

When Reuven stopped resisting, Dubi brought a hoe from his car, and I started to dig a hole. Dubi urged me to leave, so that no one spotted Reuven's car there. He stayed behind, finished digging the hole and buried Reuven. I drove away, and rolled the car downhill in an abandoned area near Safed.

One of the people in my gang, who followed Reuven for me, was Turko. He was our partner in drug dealings and robberies. He knew that Dubi and I had killed Reuven.

About three months after Reuven's death, the three of us decided to rob the Holy Gospel Church in Nazareth. To this purpose we arranged access and escape routes and organized all the logistics. Our intention was to enter the church at night, wake up the people who lived there, tie them up, take all there was there - gold jewelry and cash - and make our escape.

We decided that the date for this job would be the first stormy night to come. On a stormy night there are lots of noises, and it is difficult for people to detect activity outside their house.

One day, after a rainy night, we heard on the news that the church had been robbed. It was done exactly as we had planned. Dubi and I knew without any doubt that Turko was the one who pulled it off.

According to the unwritten laws of our world, he had to give us our share, even if we had not participated, and compensate us. All this on the condition that we forgive him his betrayal.

In the morning we tried to locate him, but he had disappeared. He called Dubi in the evening. He did not mention the robbery on the telephone, but said he was in Tel-Aviv and that he would meet us the next evening.

The next morning I heard on the radio that a car bomb had exploded on Dubi's street in Kiryat-Shmona. I really loved Dubi, and was prepared to do anything for him. I drove over there immediately, and the neighbors told me that Dubi and his wife were injured. I drove to the hospital in Safed, where they had been taken, in a medium to severe condition. We spoke in whispers. He said to me, "Take Turko on a trip."

I told myself that if Turko was not involved in the explosion, he would come to the meeting that evening, as arranged, and if he didn't show up, it would point to his involvement.

After the hospital I went to the home of Marco, one of our gang, and we made plans. Turko did not come to the planned meeting, nor did he visit Dubi in the hospital. I returned to Marco's house, and we decided that I would look for Turko at his parents' house. I did not find him, so I waited for him. When I saw him approach, I acted as if I just happened to be there. I talked to him, and he denied all involvement in the matter and raised suspicions about others. I suggested we go together to visit Dubi in the hospital, and that he would pick me up in his car.

I informed Marco and another friend, and all three of us waited in front of my house. The other friend and I got into his car, as if we were going to the hospital, and Marco followed us in his.

The plan was to pull out a gun on the way and force him to detour to a side road, where we could question him. We did that, but he stopped the car in the middle of the road and refused to drive anywhere.

In the crime world, I was considered less senior than Turko. He was ten years older, and had served many prison sentences. It was beneath him to obey my orders, so he ignored me. I loaded the gun and aimed it at his feet, and a bullet went off accidentally very close to his foot. He did not know that it was an accident, got scared, became obedient and drove to a parking lot nearby.

I instructed him to move into the back seat of the two-door car, to minimize the possibility of his escape. I drove and the other friend guarded him with the gun. I drove in the direction of an isolated spot in the mountains.

Meanwhile, it began to get dark. We parked near some apple groves, and started to interrogate him. He was overconfident and told us that we would not get away with what we were doing. At one point he even taunted me, called me a boy and treated me with contempt. I slapped him, and my two friends had to intervene and calm things down. He vehemently denied any connection to the church robbery. We told him that his partner in that job, Mois, had confessed to us and that we held him, too.

This is a situation in which both parties are on the brink, and whoever has stronger nerves will prevail. He continued to deny his involvement, and said, "I wager my head that Mois would not confess to his participation in front of me."

We bound his hands and acted as if we were going to Tiberias to question Mois in front of Turko, in the hope that he would become more and more frightened on the way and admit his involvement.

There were two reasons for not killing him on the spot. One was that we had not intended to kill him at all, just hurt him. The second was that we wanted to know where he had hidden the loot from the church robbery, which was estimated at one million dollars.

We suddenly saw the blue light of a police car approaching on the road. We were afraid that the police were looking for us after the explosion that morning, so we hid the gun and decided to get out of there.

We drove to the Kishon port, where there were many abandoned containers, in one of which we intended to hide Turko, and then go question his partner.

We took a wrong turning by mistake, and when trying to turn the car around, got stuck in the sand. He began provoking us, even though his hands were tied. You could say that he was very brave. Marco and I tried to push the car, and told Turko to stay in the car, but he ignored us and got out. His hands were tied, so he could hardly escape. We walked in the direction of the main road, to ask another car to tow us out, and Turko was certain that that would be the end of this affair and that he would be released.

We knew for certain that if we released him, we would all be dead the next day, maybe our families too. Our intention was to lock him up in a hidden place, and try to get information about the stolen goods out of him or out of his partner.

We saw someone approaching from the distance with a flashlight. It was the night watchman, who had heard our car. He shouted, "Who's there? Who's there?"

We hid between the bushes with Turko. We didn't have the gun, because we had hid it near the apple grove. This made Turko confident.

The watchman came closer. We couldn't see him, just the light from his flashlight. When he was near the car, Turko tried to call out. I put my hand over his mouth, and Marco laid him on the ground and sat on him. He resisted, managed to get out my hold, and gave a small scream. We were about fifty yards from the watchman. Marco covered his mouth and I strangled him for about ten minutes, until the night watchman left. It was not clear to me that I was killing him, but at that moment I really didn't care if he died.

By the time the watchman left, Turko was dead. We dug a hole in the ground with a piece of wood and buried him.

Turko did not have to die. If he had admitted to his participation in the robbery, the rules would have changed. His position would have become inferior, and he would have had to ask our pardon. Even so, there would have still been the possibility that he would come after me, but having admitted to betraying us, it is as if saying that he deserved the punishment.

I was involved in the death of two people in a period of a few months.

Someone like myself, involved with the world of crime, knows that there is the possibility that he will kill someone or be killed himself. From the moment he is aware of this and accepts it, he is not surprised when it actually happens.

I did not have a bad conscience over what I did, nor do I to this day. It was very clear that if he had lived, I would have been dead. All the same, I am sorry about the road I took in life, which led me to the actions I committed. I know today that it was the wrong road to take, and I hope that this story will prevent other youngsters from traveling that same road.

With Intent to Kill

"They say that those who were not in the Holocaust will never understand what happened there, and those who were there, need no explanation. For psychologists to really understand me, they would have to be like me. They would have to kill a certain person on a given date, one on one. They couldn't do it, so they will never understand me."

This is a quotation from the story of Yariv Gutman, which closes the list of interviews. I could not find a decision-making theory to apply to this story, and I cannot understand why he killed his manager. A psychological theory might be of help in understanding his motives.

It is interesting, nevertheless, to observe the distinction between the need to kill and the need to have the other person dead. In the following story, and also in some previous ones, the real need is for the act of murder itself and not for the opponent to disappear.

The interview with Yariv is brought here almost unedited. Yariv's openness, his complex and special personality, and our acquaintance of many years, have enabled me to conduct an open and free interview with one who committed cold-blooded murder and who says of himself that under certain circumstances there is a possibility, albeit slight, that he would do it again.

Yariv Gutman

After school, I joined the paratroopers. I wanted to be a fighter and was attracted to the glory of the unit. I read war stories, like "The Guns of Navarone," and wanted to be like the individualistic warriors in that book. But when I got to the army, they stood me in line and expected me to go on parade drill.

I was in the paratroopers, but actually, most of the time I wasn't there. I was awol or a deserter intermittently. All I saw was the bad side of the army. I saw nothing good. I had problems with my commanders all the time. They suggested that I get an early discharge on grounds of lack of adjustment, but I refused. I wanted to end my army service and start civilian life like anybody else.

After my discharge from the army I got a job in a security plant that manufactured explosives. That is where I met Amnon, my manager, and the trouble started again. I tried to be OK, but he conspired against me. He claimed that I was late for work, and was not on schedule. Today I can see his logic. I cannot accept what he did to me, but I understand it better.

During my basic training in the army I suffered worse things and worse humiliation, but I never thought of destroying anyone. I continually thought of the possibility of killing those who were against me, but not rationally. I thought to myself, "I wish he were dead" or "When we get to the firing range, I will shoot him in the head," but nothing ever happened. Theoretically, I could have shot someone at the firing range.

To me, the value of human life is not permanent or above all considerations. It is determined like the rates of shares in the stock market. The method works everywhere. Some are worth more and some are worth less.

I remember my first meeting with Amnon. It was actually OK. I had no problem with the professional side of the job, just with the discipline. Occasionally, over a period of time, he started giving me all sorts of unexpected tests. At first I paid no attention. "What game is he playing with me?" The cat and mouse games started later. It became a personal struggle, whether I could adhere to the schedule and how long he could carry on the game. Finally, both he and I got fed up with it.

At first, I regarded it as fair play. "Let's see how long he can run me around, and to which extent I can fulfill my tasks." Not all the other workers fulfilled their tasks, but he was especially hard on me. As long as all this took place in our department, it was fine, but when it came to the attention of the management, where he complained that I was inciting the other workers and pressured them to transfer me from production to services, I began contemplating getting rid of him.

At the time, it was very important for me to remain in production and succeed, but I saw that I could not give him what he wanted from me. I think he went by the doctrine of "First break the dog, then train it." I decided he would not break me.

When I reached the decision to kill him, I already saw him dead. He was no longer a person to me.

I remember how I came to the decision. On a certain day I had a bad toothache and asked to leave work in order to go to the dentist. He told me to wait till the end of the day, and then go.

I was alone at the time. I had no one to talk to. I had a girlfriend before that, but we broke up. That is also a story. I wanted to kill her too.

- Did you seriously consider it, or just in passing?

What do you mean consider? I cocked the gun, but she began to cry, so I let her go.

That was about five months before I killed Amnon. If she had not cried, I would have killed her for sure.

We met before the army. We even discussed marriage. She came from a broken home, and wanted to get married and leave home. But I was only a simple soldier and she was a tramp.

One day when I was in a military prison for desertion, as usual, I got an invitation to her wedding. I loved her, and I was in jail this time because I had deserted in order to pay for an abortion for her, and suddenly I get an invitation to her wedding with someone else.

I decided to kill her as soon as I got out. When I was released, I went to her house with my weapon intending to kill her. I did not try to change her decision to get married. Her decision no longer interested me. We drove to some orange grove, I cocked my gun, but when I aimed at her and wanted to pull the trigger, she started crying and told me a story about her parents and her sick father.

When she started crying, she suddenly turned human. She was suddenly the same Rina I had known before. I forgot the betrayal, the letter, everything. I knew that she and I were through, but I could not hurt her. Like some sort of taboo.

- Can you identify the point that made you not pull the trigger? Was it her crying? Could it be that you were satisfied by her crying?

She cried in a different context. She didn't cry because I was going to kill her, but because of her sick father. That was also a lie. It was also not true.

Maybe I did not pull the trigger, because I still loved her. Maybe . . . Maybe I had not altogether given up on our relationship, because if I destroy her completely, then it is final. Maybe I was hoping we would get together again. I took her home, and that was the end of that.

I was discharged from the army a short while later, and that was when the Amnon story began.

- It sounds like murder was already in your system.

I was walking around with a death wish, to kill someone. It did not happen with Rina, but it could be someone else.

- Were you angry at the world, looking for someone to take it out on? A representative . . . ?

It seems so. I don't know the exact reason to this day.

- Did your decision to kill her stem from an insult?

I thought that a creature like her should not exist.

- OK, but how did you feel? What did it do to you?

I didn't feel. Like a zombie. No pain, no hurt, beyond feelings. Not even revenge. Just something to do.

- So what do you really care? On the one hand, cool, no need for revenge, and on the other hand you go and do it. What offended you? What does it keep saying to you? That you are worthless? To what basic thing did you react?

Betrayal.

- Betrayal?

In this case.

- So, could it be that you killed Amnon instead of killing her?

It could be. It is a reasonable possibility. In his case there was no betrayal. So it is yes and no. In his case it was a threat.

- Instead of killing yourself, maybe?

Maybe instead of killing myself. Look, the value of my life was not very high at the time.

- Did you consider suicide?

Yes, many times. I am not brave enough.

- No, I don't mean now. At the time, when you heard she was getting married, instead of killing . . .

No, not then. But when the quarrel with Amnon started, it was one of the possible solutions. Today, when I think about it, I don't understand what I did it for. At least, if it had been during a robbery, I could have earned a few dollars from it. If it had at least been for some cause, like the guy who climbed the Everest just because it was there, but I did not feel anything special after committing the murder.

- Do you think that there is a chance today that you will kill again? Could it happen?

Theoretically, yes. Practically, I think not. Listen, I am more in control. It always comes up as a solution to problems. On various opportunities. I sometimes laugh to myself when I think of it. Like a computer disk. There is a row of solutions, and this is one of them. The question is whether you choose it or not.

- Let's get back to Amnon. He would not let you leave work early to go to the dentist . . .

That was the last straw. There were all these confrontations before, especially the threat to transfer me to different work. Actually, he threatened my life as I saw it.

- So then you decided to kill him . . .

Yes, not shoot him though. I did not want to get caught. I sat and planned how the best chances were for me not to get caught.

- It was important to you not to get caught.

Yes.

- Wouldn't you have been satisfied to hurt him in a different way?

No. I was not after revenge, punishing him, hurting him, or any of those things. Just for him to disappear. That that thing, and at the time he was already a thing not a living creature, should disappear.

- And if he had been transferred to a different department?

That is a different story. Then he would not exist near me.

- When you did what you did, did you mean to kill him?

Yes.

- You didn't mean to hurt him?

No.

- You wanted his physical death, not just his disappearance from the arena of your life?

I wanted him to cease to exist. That something like that would not be there.

- Did it bother you that he was alive?

His very existence.

- If you had been told, the day before you killed him, that he was being transferred, would you have tried to kill him that day, or would you have given up?

Difficult question. I don't know.

- Would you have been satisfied if . . .

Listen, I wanted to kill. I wanted to kill. It was a need, before the story with Rina and before the story with Amnon. Simply a need to kill.

- Since when do you know it, this need to kill?

From quite an early age.

- Can you tell me where you identified it?

I remember at school, during fights I would go all the way. Strangle, kick, try to be in control. I did not fight just to knock someone down. I wanted my opponent not to be. Not that he surrenders or learn not to mess with me, but not to be, and that's it.

I love animals. Sometimes I killed puppies that I raised, because I could not bring them into the house. Instead of letting them go, I killed them, puppies that I had loved and taken care of for a while. I am not proud of this, even a bit ashamed, but I enjoyed killing them. It gave me a sense of superiority. Not something ongoing or that affects you later. Suddenly you stop regarding the puppy as a living creature, which has feelings for you and you have feelings for it.

- Didn't it bother you to kill a puppy you loved and played with?

The first time or two I felt a sort of tick in my heart. Like sorrow. Later I didn't.

I do not believe that a person can kill someone without first killing himself. Not physically, but emotionally. You do not feel hate. You feel nothing. Logic remains, maybe even sharper, but feelings do not exist. The affair with Amnon, for instance. There was no fear if I would get caught or not. I was sure I would not. Everything was fully planned.

Murder is regarded very negatively, but actually every soldier is a potential killer. Why else would they teach him to use a gun? To fire it at official funerals? In a situation where his existence, as he perceives it or as he is taught to perceive it, is threatened, he will kill. He will even receive a medal for it.

A soldier is trained to shoot down a sentry. Think logically. This sentry is no direct threat to the soldier. You are trained to kill a person who stands in your way to some goal. To approach him stealthily from behind and stick a knife in his ribs. You are taught to kill in order to achieve a goal. You do it gladly, because it is an acceptable goal. It covers up a certain collective way of thinking. But since we do not live in a communist state, what about individualists? I am bothered by a man in a green wig. Where do we draw the line?

- What are you saying? That your girlfriend, Rina, and your manager, Amnon, threatened you in a similar way like a soldier threatened by the enemy?

Yes, something like that. A threat to my existence. It does not have to be physical existence. Existence as you grasp it. When a terrorist threatens me with a weapon, I say, if I don't kill him, he will kill me. With my girlfriend it was more complex. With my manager it was exactly the same. If I don't kill him, he will make me lose my job. To me, losing my job was like annihilating my existence. There is no reason not to deny the existence of someone, who wants to deny mine.

- You really distorted the damage to yourself as opposed to the damage to him.

I don't know. You know what, let us assume for a moment that I didn't kill him. I lost my job, and was so damaged emotionally, that I am still in a mental hospital. In such a case, he would have succeeded in harming my existence, although I am alive. To me, losing my job seemed like an enormous blow to my ego.

- Explain this, why don't most people who are fired see it as something severe enough to justify murder, yet you did? Your girlfriend also did not threaten you physically, just psychologically. So what exactly threatens you?

The feeling of remaining with nothing. You are left with nothing. Not yourself, not anyone else, nothing. Sort of nothing. Sort of like an abyss. A vacuum. In both cases you are left in a vacuum. One is an emotional vacuum, where you lose a girlfriend, and in the other you lose yourself. You could say that the alternatives were to kill yourself or the other person, and you chose to kill someone else. More convenient and less painful.

- Can you remember the exact moment you decided to kill him?

Finally, finally? It was in the early evening. I had started the afternoon shift, just as he left for a meeting out of town. I decided that when he returned, he would "get it." That was the moment it became final and planned and that's it. It was sealed. Not "I wish he were dead," but "he will die!"

It was not in reaction to anything momentary. These were actually some quiet days, a real idyll. Joyous. He's OK, I'm OK, everyone's OK. And then I suddenly saw him go to this meeting, and I decided that I was going to kill him. It was a chance for me. I knew it was my chance, because he had left without his briefcase.

I had all sorts of alternatives: shoot him, blow him up, cause an accident. I wanted to kill him. Not getting caught - was secondary. The challenge was to kill him and that's it. Something to do. A mission to be completed. I knew he had to

return to the plant after his meeting, so I booby-trapped his briefcase with explosives manufactured at the plant.

- Didn't it bother you that there might be other people in the office?

No, that was impossible. There were hardly ever any people in our division on the second shift, apart from me. There were people in other divisions, but there was no fear that anyone would be in the office with him.

- Did you want not to hurt others?

I didn't care.

- You didn't care, or you didn't want to?

It does nothing to me. There was no issue of "it is important not to hurt anyone else." After the explosion it became important. I hadn't known that there was a quantity of experimental explosives in his office, which set off explosions all over the place. I ran for help and to get all the other workers outside. After I got help, I returned and took Amnon outside. It was a very eventful evening.

- Were you happy to see him killed?

I felt satisfaction. I did something well. There was also this weird feeling that a few minutes ago this was a person, and now it is like a piece of meat on a butcher's block. You feel nothing. It is just a slab of meat.

- I want to go back to your puppies, whom you loved on the one hand, but enjoyed killing on the other hand.

Look, I didn't enjoy it until the moment I killed them. At that moment I enjoyed it. Like satisfaction that I am going to do something, I do it and I finish it. To start something, to finish it, and then nothing.

Today I couldn't do it. All the ingredients are there in me, but something stops me. It is not being in jail. It is also not fear of the psychopathic element of "satisfaction from killing." It does not seem unusual to me that someone gets killed or that I kill someone, and something stops existing. It happens, sooner or later, by something or someone. I am sure that some of the things I am saying now are the result of long, deep thought I have given to the issue of murder. I know they are not good reasons.

If there is anything that bothers me about this story it is why I really killed him. I have technical reasons, but what is the reason - I don't know. I cannot identify it. I don't enjoy causing anyone suffering. If you gave me the choice between injuring and killing someone, I would choose to kill him. There is a problem, this is the solution, period. Injury is an ongoing thing, with an element of punishment and teaching a lesson, I am not interested in it. With an injury, you must go on. A dead person - is dead. I never dreamed about Amnon. He is dead. He just died to me. I deal with it only in everyday matters. Not emotionally. Somewhere I am sorry that he is dead, but that is not the headline of my thoughts.

- If there had been an explosion at the plant during work hours, and Amnon had been in trouble, would you have helped him out?

I don't know. I might have. It might have shifted my focus. And it is possible that I would have killed him after I rescued him. It's hard to tell. I'm speculating.

- If someone had told you that he wanted to kill Amnon, would it have satisfied you?

No, I wanted to kill him. I wanted to do it. I wanted him to disappear.

- But if someone else had caused him to disappear?

I don't know. Don't know. I once had a thought that if I could clap my hands and make him disappear, maybe I would have chosen that. But in my opinion, at the time Amnon was not my problem, I was my problem. I used him to fill my need.

- Still, where did this need come from?

Possibly somewhere in my childhood. Freud, Shmeud and all that nonsense. I never remember being afraid of death. It didn't scare me. Not my death and not anyone else's death. It didn't seem like something big. Just part of life, or maybe life is part of death.

- Do you have a problem with eating human flesh?

On principle, no. I never tried it, but I have no problem with it.

- If you had been told in a restaurant that the meat you had just eaten was human flesh, would it have made you throw up?

No, I don't regard humans as special creatures. Some people eat human flesh, don't they? People eat other animals too. I would not want to be the main course, but after my death, I don't care. Really not. I regard man as an object. An object like a dog, not like a door. A door is less alive. It merits less consideration. It's like I operate on two emotional levels. One is accepted by society and the other isn't. I can switch from one to the other.

- Is the switch ON today?

I haven't killed anyone in a long time. The solution is always in my head. I can skip over it, although it goes through my mind about my ex-foreman at work, for instance.

- What is the chance you will kill someone else? One to ten one to a hundred, one to a thousand?

I think one to a hundred. I am not afraid of the deed itself, but I am afraid of being caught. Jail was not a bed of roses for me.

If I knew for sure that I could get away with it, I would be indifferent to killing another person. It doesn't seem to me to have a significance of its own. Only the significance from the point of view of reward and punishment. I might be philosophizing, but people kill each other every day all day. Not actually kill, but with a word, or at work, and you kill them back, "I wish he was dead."

I cannot understand why people fear death. Some people are afraid to go to the cemetery at night. I go almost every night. I take the dogs for a walk at night, and we pass through the cemetery. I have no problem with death. Death is like the flu. The flu is worse, because you suffer from it. Death is death and it's final.

- If someone threatened your life, would you be indifferent?

Look, I decided to commit suicide many times. And suddenly I caught myself thinking how I would be found and all that. If I am still curious about what will happen after, then I haven't decided to finish. If it doesn't happen one time, then it doesn't matter if I was curious or not.

On the other hand, if a terrorist would want to kill me, I would try to hurt him. I am not keen on getting hurt. The terrorist is a threat to me. Not death itself, but the terrorist. He creates a situation. It is not something neutral. There is a struggle, and I want to come out of it on top. I don't mind him killing me. I mind him winning. For instance, If I had gotten the death penalty for the murder I committed, it wouldn't have mattered to me. I wouldn't have appealed. I wasn't shocked when I got the life sentence. I didn't care much when my mother died. A person dies and that's it. It really does nothing to me.

I cannot explain to myself today why I don't kill my present foreman. I can't stand him and he can't stand me. And there are all sorts of occasional people that there is no chance I will be caught if I kill. Murder has also lost its significance. It is no longer a solution. Killing is not what it used to be (laughing).

It reminds me, when I was very young I tinkered with engines. I would take them apart and reassemble them. I could do it days and nights, and during that time I was cut off from the world. But when I finished with an engine, I forgot all about it. No satisfaction, nothing. That is how I feel about murder. It happened, it is over, goodbye.

- Is there anything you love?

Nothing. There are some things I like, but I have no problem giving them up. That is why I have no plans. I prefer whatever comes along. Even now, I had a girlfriend lately and we broke up, I expected to be devastated, but nothing. Tick, over, c'est tous.

I would be glad if she called and said that she had thought about us and wanted to come back, but it is not critical. If something had happened to her while we were together, it would have caused me pain. If she had died - no. If she dies - she is gone. Finished. If it had saddened me that would have been my egoistic need, because it isn't because she died, but because she died for me.

I don't remember myself crying. Sometimes I want to have that feeling of pain and tears, but for now it is better I don't. It is my protection. Death is also a protection against pain. I kill the problem, so it doesn't exist and cannot hurt me. It is not an issue of revenge like in a Turkish movie. It is simply that whoever hurt me will not exist. Will not exist, did not exist, is gone.

You tell me it is inhuman, but what is human? People accepted all sorts of rules and decided that they were human, and ignore other things that are human too, like murder. People do it. We are actually the only living creatures who kill each other. I am not saying that I killed for philosophical reasons, but it doesn't seem to me that killing someone is so exceptional. It doesn't seem to be something so weird. It was only my first time, and the last, but I wasn't excited. It is not something you do once in your life, for the thrill, like a trip to India.

Lately I was offered a tractor driver's course, so that I could take the place of the driver that was currently working for the building company I work for. I wanted the job badly. I knew they were going to fire him within a few months. The thought immediately jumped into my head, "hold on, why don't I remove him, and then the transfer will be much quicker?" Logically it works, no one would have known.

- So why don't you do it?

It's not worth it. The effort did not seem equal to the reward, to be a tractor driver. I didn't like the sound of "committed murder because he wanted to become a tractor driver." On second thought it sounds legitimate. Some people do it.

I can see pictures of his family and their tears, but that's their problem. I don't care anymore when I see someone crying.

- You say that you have murder thoughts even now, as a solution to problems at work. Why, do you think, do these thoughts occur to you and not to me when I have problems at work?

You never experienced it. I experienced murder, and from my point of view it succeeded, because I separate the matter of punishment from the deed itself. From my point of view, I succeeded and the murder solved my problem. The thing that bothered me, the disturbance, the hindrance - disappeared.

Today, my attitude to murder is similar to the solution of a certain technical problem, like a malfunction in your car. You know how to approach the distributor and you know how to solve the problem. When you open the hood of the car, you already know how you will go about it. My case is similar.

I know the engine, and I also know a different approach, which is murder. You do not know that approach. It is not part of your input of solutions. It is not recorded and not imprinted. You didn't think of it and you didn't do it. I have it recorded and it comes up automatically on my screen. It cannot be erased. It is a solution that always appears on my list of possibilities.

My dog was full of sores. I took him to the vet, but nothing helped. At some stage I thought that if the situation went on, I would kill him. I knew where and when. It didn't seem like something special to me, although I love him. He is a great dog. But I could have killed him to keep him from suffering anymore. Maybe to keep me from suffering any more either.

It is hard for me to look after him and watch him suffer. We'll finish it and that's it. Gone. I will have no problem, and he will probably have no problems either. I know that the answer to ease his suffering is relatively nice and acceptable, but it is probably not the true answer. The true answer is that I would kill him so I wouldn't have a problem of caring for him and all that is involved. His suffering bothers me, but I eliminate it first and foremost for myself, and if he gains from it too - that's even better. That's as to the dog. There is no big difference between my attitude to killing a dog and a person.

-Do you eliminate anything, people, animals and objects that cause you suffering, even if you love them?

Yes, that's true. It reminds me when I was little, I had a children's building game called "Mechano." I loved playing with it, but it was used in sanctions against me. If I was a bad boy, they took it away, and when I was good, I got it back. One day, when my mother was out, I took the game and totally destroyed it. No more sanctions. It is true that I couldn't enjoy the game anymore, but they couldn't threaten me. I got rid of the problem. I could also have gotten rid of my mother (with cynical humor), but that would have been complicated, I was really young.

During my time in jail, I met many psychologists. I could communicate with some of them, but found it difficult to explain what had happened to me. They say that if you haven't been in the Holocaust, you will never understand what happened there, and if you were there, you require no explanation. For psychologists to really understand me, they would have to be like me. To kill a certain person on a certain date. One on one. They couldn't do it, so they can never understand me.

At some stage of my prison term, I really tried to use them to understand what had happened to me and to change. To be a better creature by their terms (cynical). But I thought, I have myself, I know me. I have to change, and with my luck, I might get stuck in the middle, and I will have neither. It is simpler to stay with what I've got. I am used to the smell.

- Do you mean tough? Were you afraid to discover that you were human? What were you afraid of?

I don't think I'm tough. I was afraid to be in the middle. A nothing person. Not bad, not good, nothing. I don't think I'm a bad man. I can be very bad, and I can be good, and I can be in the middle. I just have no principles. The only principle I want to have is lack of principles, but that is hard to achieve.

- Do you have the wish to love?

Of course I have the wish to love. I want to love and I miss, but it is for a short term. I can make the switch. It doesn't last. It takes me seconds and that's it. I don't dwell on it, don't remember and don't miss. It is all to protect myself, of course.

I heard, for instance, that there is hunger in Pakistan. I don't know the people there. If I hadn't heard about the hunger there, I could have thought that they were having a great time. The fact that I know about the hunger does not make their situation worse. If someone I love has cancer, and I don't know about it, then it doesn't bother me. It bothers them. As soon as I know, it begins to bother me, but their degree of suffering will not change. If I kill them, or they die of the cancer, my problem will be solved. The actual act of killing is not the problem.

Summary

At first glance, the words murder and decisions seem obvious. Apparently, murder is the deed by which one deliberately causes the death of another person, and decision is the process of choice between alternatives.

Actually, we find that many jurists, and specifically the Supreme Court, deliberate at length as to the distinction between murder and manslaughter, and struggle to find the suitable criteria for defining murder. Nor is the definition of the concept "decision" sufficiently clear. Is it an ongoing or a spontaneous process? Is it conscious or unconscious? Is it rational or emotional?

The process of buying a car, which includes defining your goals and considering the degree to which various alternatives fulfill these goals, is usually considered a rational process of decision making. When one buys poison and secretly pours it into someone's drink with the knowledge that this will cause his death, he has, without doubt, gone through a rational and conscious process of making a decision to kill the other person.

Consider this: When a person performs a spontaneous act, such as wiping the sweat off one's face on a hot day, or picking up a heavy object during a fight, throwing it at another and killing that person, did the same rational and conscious process take place, or are these emotional, irrational acts similar to those performed by animals?

Maclean (1990) states that a conscious process is one in which we verbally report to ourselves what we are doing, as if observing from the outside. Is the act of murder, described above, the result of a decision reached during the act itself, or is it the result of a decision reached, consciously or unconsciously, a short or long while before the incident itself occurred?

Could it be that the deed, which seems to be the result of a detailed and logical process of decision-making, is, in fact, the result of an unconscious decision, which was reached sometime in the past? It is possible that the process of choosing a car only seems to be based on logical, rational thought, but is actually emotional: you see a car that you like, and the so-called rational process only serves to justify the decision, which was already reached emotionally.

The Israeli Supreme Court (1955) ruled, in this connection, that "in the world we live in, people act according to their character, which is determined before they are born, and which is influenced by everything that has happened to them before the act they committed. There are events in the life of a ten-year-old, which will influence him at the age of twenty or thirty. It is possible that the event itself is forgotten, but is nevertheless sealed upon his subconscious."

Watson & Buede (1987) claim that, in certain cultures, freedom of choice is totally denied, and no one makes a decision, because everything is predetermined

by God. Howard (1980) claims the same about Buddhism, and adds that the concept of decision is a Western invention.

Hogarth (1980) states that people usually do not notice how they reach decisions, or why they prefer one alternative to another.

Holloway (1979) claims that, in many cases, we reach decisions in an automatic or programmed way. For instance, we don't make conscious comparisons between the possible routes of travel from the work place and home. In other cases, we reach instinctive or intuitive decisions. These are the cases in which we are pressured to make a split-second decision, like, for instance, if a child jumps out in front of our car.

MacCrimmon & Wehrung (1986) define dangerous situations, as situations in which there is lack of control, lack of information and lack of time. In the stories in this book we find various combinations of these three factors. Except for rare cases of cold-blooded, premeditated murder, most murders are characterized by lack of control, time pressure and partial information.

Rationality and Decision-Making

The theories of decision-making, both descriptive (which describe human behavior) and perspective (which advise us how to act), assume that the decision-maker is aware of the possible results of a certain decision. The probabilities of the various results are sometimes known, and sometimes unknown, but the list of possible outcomes is assumed to be known. When speaking of murder, it is not certain that the decision-maker is consciously aware that he is indeed taking the victim's life. When the murder is committed in the heat of the moment, and even in some cases when committed in cold blood, the intent is to seriously hurt the victim. Hurt in the sense of humiliating and degrade, and also in the physical sense of the word, but not necessarily to kill him. Although it is an answer to the killer's immediate needs, the death of the victim is not necessarily the only way to satisfy these needs.

At times, death is caused by an accident during the desire to hurt, and not by the desire to kill. Kahneman (1994), and Kahneman & Tversky (1984) state that, there is a distinction between the decision utility of an outcome, which is the weight assigned to that outcome in a decision, and the experienced utility, which is the measure of the hedonic experience of that outcome.

The process of reaching a decision to murder, and certainly if arrived at in a moment of anger and excitement, has in it a clear distinction between the preference of the killer while committing the murder, and his preference a moment later, when it becomes clear to him that the victim is dead.

Kahneman (1994) adds that "the history of an individual through time can be described as succession of separate selves, which may have incompatible preferences, and may make decisions that affect subsequent selves." This is only one example out of many of the "lack of rationality" in decision-making processes.

Another relevant topic in considering the process of decision making which leads to murder is the "Paradox of Crisis Escalation." This paradox, as described by Maoz (1990), says that "many of us have been in situations in which we have confronted an opponent, and although both wanted to avoid a fight, each wanted the other to be the first to blink. In many cases, such confrontations end in fights that the parties involved wanted to avoid but could not prevent." (Maoz, 1990).

Decision-makers in crisis "ignore significant portions of relevant information available to them, distort the meaning of other information, and engage in only limited effort to explore multiple alternatives, and their evaluation of the alternatives explored is only partial and biased." (Maoz, 1990).

The above characteristics are obvious in most murders described in this book. In particular, the ones concerning underworld killings, are reminiscent of escalating hostilities between countries, which ended in a war that both countries did not want. In both cases, the opposing parties assume that they are in control of the situation and of the direction in which the confrontation will develop.

Separation and withdrawal, instead of confrontation, whether between armies or opponents, could have solved the problem. Divorce, change of a domicile in a neighbors' dispute, or a request for intervention by a respectable third party, could have prevented some of the murders. A crisis escalates to murder not because the killer consciously decides that it is what he wants, but because he failed to properly assess that his actions would eventually lead to murder.

In this context, it is interesting to quote Dostoyevsky in "Crime and Punishment":

"He simply did not believe himself and obstinately, slavishly groped for objections on all sides, as if he were driven by some compulsion. His reactions during this last day, which had come upon him so unexpectedly and settled everything at one stroke, were almost completely mechanical, as though someone had taken his hand and pulled him along irresistibly, blindly, with supernatural strength and without objection. It was as if a part of his clothing had been caught in the wheel of a machine and he was being dragged into it."

And also -

"...nearly every criminal, at the moment of the crime, was subject to a collapse of will power and reason, exchanging them for an extraordinarily childish heedlessness, and that just at the moment when judgement and caution were most indispensable. He was convinced that this eclipse of reason and failure of will attacked a man like an illness, developed gradually and reached their height shortly before the commission of the crime, continuing unchanged at the moment of commission and for some time, varying with the individual, afterwards."

Another central issue in decision making processes is uncertainty. According to the Utility Theory, the decision-maker maximizes his utility weighted by the relevant probabilities, i.e., his expected utility.

Although utility theory is an acceptable normative model, it is severely criticized as a descriptive model of decision making under uncertainty.

Simon (1982), who presented the limitations of rational thinking and the inability to scan all alternatives and evaluate all probabilities, and Kahneman & Tversky (1979), who suggested the Prospect Theory as a replacement of the Utility Theory, are the most prominent in refuting the behavioral concepts, which are the basis of the Utility Theory of Von Neuman & Morgenstern (1944), and which assume rational decision-making.

Tversky and Kahneman (1986) demonstrate how people behave differently, when an identical problem is presented in different ways. This phenomenon is called the Framing Effect, and is very important to our case, when the choice between alternatives is presented in a positive light, i.e., as a choice between two good alternatives, or in a negative light, i.e., between two negative alternatives. They showed that people prefer certainty when choosing between good alternatives, yet prefer uncertainty and ambiguity when choosing between bad alternatives.

Based on the interviews I conducted for this book and the very many discussions that I had with prisoners, it seems to me that the criminal outlook motivates them to compare negative alternatives, and therefore to take risks. This is a decision-making process which stems from the attitude that "I have nothing to lose, and even if I fail, my situation will not be significantly worse." The theoretic expression of this kind of behavior is a convex value curve in the negative area, i.e., decreasing marginal damage.

In addition to the special value curve, presented by Kahneman & Tversky (1979) in their Prospect Theory, which implies risk taking in the negative domain and aversion of risk in the positive domain, Prospect Theory also includes a weighing function of probabilities. It is best described by Tversky and Wakker (1995): "An event has greater impact when it turns impossibility into possibility (possibility effect), or possibility into certainty (certainty effect), than when it merely makes a possibility more or less likely." This effect is also presented by Allais (1953) in his famous paradox, which won him the Nobel Prize.

This subject is extremely important in the decision-making process which leads to murder. The transition from uncertainty to definite certainty is apparent in many stories. We read that some men killed their wives as soon as they were absolutely certain that they were unfaithful to them. As long as there was doubt, the man was violent and aggressive, but not murderous. The moment he discovered his wife in the arms of another man, or when he was blatantly told so by her, he felt as if there was no choice and nothing to hide behind, and he killed her. Similar situations are mentioned in cases of betrayal in the underworld.

Information and Decisions

The question, whether additional information has positive value, is an interesting one. When one reaches a decision, does he prefer to always have more information, or are there situations in which he would prefer to have less information?

In my opinion (Yassour 1983, 1984), people prefer information when choosing between positive alternatives, and prefer ambiguity when choosing between negative alternatives. This opinion is supported by Ellsberg (1961) in his famous paradox, and by Tversky (1993), who proposes a "probability museum," in which some of the paintings would be originals and some fakes. This would enable the distribution of the original paintings in a number of museums, so that many more people would be able to enjoy them. In his view, people are not offended by a certain probability. They are either offended or not. Therefore, if they do not know for sure which painting is an original and which is a fake they cannot be offended.

As opposed to the above, the findings of Einhorn & Hogarth (1986) show that people do not prefer ambiguity, not only in the positive, but also in the negative domain.

Shafir & Tversky (1992) present an interesting finding concerning uncertainty and decision-making processes. They state that many would prefer a certain decision after an event had occurred, and would prefer the same decision if the same event had not occurred, but would prefer an opposite decision if they did not know whether the very same event had occurred or not. For instance, they asked students if they would go on a very inexpensive and attractive vacation in Hawaii, if they knew that they had passed their final exams. Most (70%) answered in the affirmative. Other students were asked if they would go on the same vacation, if they knew that they had failed their finals, and most (67%) answered affirmatively. On the other hand, when asked if they would decide to go on the vacation before they knew the final results, or would wait for the results to come in, most (63%) preferred the second possibility.

Another example, perhaps more appropriate to this book, is the behavior of participants in the "prisoner's dilemma" game. Three percent of the participants said that they would cooperate, if they knew that the other player was not cooperating and 16% said that they would cooperate if they knew that the other was cooperating. On the other hand, if they did not know in advance what the other player was doing, the percentage of cooperators reached 37%.

This behavior refutes the "Sure Thing Principle" (Savage, 1954), which is one of the pillars of rational decision making theory. We see that uncertainty causes changes in decisions, even if the outcome about which there is uncertainty does not matter.

An example from this book is the story of Danni Shmueli, who wanted to take revenge upon Arabs for the killings of his girlfriend and two Israeli students by terrorists. Danni shot a missile at an Arab bus, and killed one passenger. Had he known for sure that he would have missed the bus, he might not have fired the missile. Had he known for sure that he would hit the bus and kill one person, he might not have fired. It is possible that the decision to fire the missile was reached only because there was uncertainty as to the outcome.

Goff (1987) questions whether the fact that it was clear to the accused that his action could cause death, is sufficient to accuse him of murder. He claims that it is not sufficient, because one can identify the possibility that he will cause death,

but minimize the probability that he will actually do so, or acknowledge the possibility, but hope that it will not happen.

In many stories in this book the killers say that they had not intended to kill the victim, just to hurt him, physically or mentally. It is possible that if they had known with certainty that the victim would die, or if they had known that the victim would not be hurt at all, they would not have started the process which eventually led to murder.

As in escalation of crisis between countries, uncertainty as to the results of the crisis enable people to reach decisions which lead directly to a dangerous process, claiming that it was impossible to predict the opponent's behavior or where the crisis would lead.

As we saw, uncertainty could be in some cases the reason to avoid committing murder, and in other cases could be the very motive for murder.

I will quote "Crime and Punishment" again:

"One noticeable peculiarity characterized all the final decisions he arrived at in this affair: the more settled they were, the more hideous and absurd they appeared in his eyes. In spite of his agonizing internal struggles he could never throughout the whole time believe for one instant in the practicability of his schemes.

"If it had somehow come about that the whole project had been analysed and finally decided down to the last detail, and no further doubts remained, he would very likely have renounced the whole idea for its absurdity, enormity, and impossibility."

Premeditated Murder

The Supreme Court in Israel, as in many countries, deals with the question of defining the act of killing and the decision-making process which leads to it.

In Criminal Appeal 410/85 (1986) the Supreme Court ruled:

"... the two components of the decision to kill are foresight of the fatal result or its anticipation by the accused and his wanting it. The proof of this highly subjective element raises many practical difficulties. In order to overcome these, the law uses the term 'assumption of intent' - an assumption which stems from general life experience, which teaches that anyone who embarks on a certain behavior, action or omission, usually intends to achieve the results that normally stem from this behavior."

"... therefore, whoever caused the death of another by an act, which by its nature and essence can cause a fatal result, also had in his heart the intent to cause the natural result of his actions."

The basic assumption of this ruling is, that the decision-making process was rational. As we saw in previous chapters of this book, this assumption has been refuted by research.

In Criminal Appeal 852/85 (1988) the Israeli Supreme Court ruled:

"A. (1) In order to convict on a murder charge, the prosecution must prove the following elements: a. preparation; b. the decision to kill and the intent to do so; c. lack of provocation.

(2) The element of preparation is purely physical, and its existence should be examined according to the circumstances of each case. The act of preparation could happen on the spot, when the decision to kill materializes. In fact, both elements are combined, as they arise and materialize in close proximity to the act that causes death. There is no need for the preparation to take any amount of time. It could materialize on the spur of the moment, even in the shortest possible time.

B. (1) A clear distinction must be made between the "decision" to kill the victim and the "intent." Knowledge, that the result will naturally be achieved by doing a deed, is sufficient for the criminal "intent," but the "decision," in addition to the intent of knowledge, requires the wish or aspiration to achieve the result.

(2) In cases, in which the accused does not reveal himself and confess his intentions and decision in a detailed confession, we can learn about the intent to kill and the accompanying decision to do so from the circumstances of the action, including the preparations. If the reasonable and unequivocal conclusion from the circumstances is, that the decision to kill materialized in the heart of the perpetrator, even if this happened very close to the time of the killing, then if the other elements exist, it can be concluded that death was caused with premeditation.

(3) The decision to kill can be determined by the character of the deed which was done, and to it we apply the (albeit, indefinite) assumption, that one intends the natural result of his action.

(4) The use of a weapon, the fatal element of which is definite, while shooting a number of bullets at a vulnerable part of the human body, speaks for itself and points to a decision to end the victim's life, and the accused will not easily give rise to doubt by the court, that when he extensively shot or stabbed the victim, he had no intention to kill, but just as one shot or one stab wound is sufficient for the other evidence, as to the decision to kill, there might be circumstances, albeit rare, in which the number of wounds does not necessarily indicate the intent to kill.

C. (1) "Provocation" is examined by two criteria: subjective and objective, with the results of both examinations accumulating. Subjectively, we must examine whether the provocative behavior actually influenced the accused to such a degree, that he lost self-control, and did the fatal deed with no regard to the consequences. Objectively, we must examine whether the spoken words could have influenced a reasonable man, so that if he were in the accused place, he would lose self-control,

and to this purpose the words must be of very offensive content. The reaction of the accused must be reasonably related to the degree of provocation. Usually, a reasonable man would not react to mere verbal provocation, or even physical, with fatal use."

On the subject of provocation, we find in Criminal Appeal 153/85 (1987):

(1) Mere verbal provocation, unaccompanied by any physical deed, is not provocation in the legal sense.

(2) The reasonable Israeli man will not take leave of his senses, to the extent of not understanding his actions and their results, only because someone called his sister a whore."

When the court mentions the "reasonable Israeli man" or a "reaction reasonably related to the degree of provocation," does it mean the Bedouin, who killed his wife or sister for dishonoring the family? Does it mean the man, whose girlfriend was killed by Arabs, and he wants to avenge her death? Does it mean the betrayed husband, whose honor, in his view, was trampled? Zilberg (1955) claims, that when discussing the reasonable man, we must mention the population we are discussing and the cultural and socioeconomic background of the accused. Arrow (1986) adds that, rationality is not a lone man's trait, but draws its strength and very meaning from its social environment.

Holmes (1897), a U.S. Supreme Federal Court Judge, said in 1897: "It is in the nature of a man's mind. A thing which you enjoyed and used as your own for a long time, whether property or opinion, takes root in your being and cannot be torn away without your resenting that and trying to defend yourself, however you came by it. The law can ask no better justification than the deepest instinct of Man."

On the other hand, the court assumes that the decision-maker is a rational man, who intends his actions and their results, and also assumes that there is a certain probability, that most people would act differently in the same situation.

Zilberg's (1955) opinion, quoted above, was the minority opinion in the trial of a man accused with the murder of his fiancée. The majority opinion, formulated by Judge Berenson (1955) was that, "if we take into account a man's origins and culture and his ethnic or racial affiliation, we actually abandon the proper test. The typical Israeli man, now being created in this country, is the one and only criterion in the provocation test."

The difference between the Israeli and English or American legal system is that, in Israel it is sufficient for two out of three judges to think that the three elements - preparation, decision and intent, lack of provocation - are present, for the accused to be convicted of murder, not manslaughter. In England or the U.S. it takes a unanimous decision of twelve jurors.

It seems to me that the objective criterion of "how a reasonable man would act" cannot be applied, because most "reasonable men" have not been in the

described situations, and there is, therefore, no probability test to prove the court's claim.

Feller (1970, 1981) distinguishes between premeditation and spontaneous intent. In his opinion, premeditation includes the birth of the idea, deliberate thought and decision. The spontaneous intent, on the other hand, is an action performed momentarily, and the deed and intent flow with no first idea or second thought.

Ovadia (1986) opposes this distinction, saying that the difference between premeditation and spontaneous intent is not qualitative, because the process, in both cases, takes a longer time than zero ($t > 0$). Ovadia suggests that the test of self-control should not be performed in units of time and space, but in units of stimulus-reaction, as done in behavioral psychology.

In summary, parallel to the changes in the assumptions about the rationality of decision-makers in Decision Theory, similar changes in the judicial system are called for. Examples in the legal area can be found in Ellickson (1989) and Hovenkamp (1991).

Murder and Suicide

In quite a few cases, one commits suicide or tries to, after having killed. This phenomenon is mentioned in some of the interviews in this book. Gibson & Klein (1961) report that a third of all suspects in murder cases in England, committed suicide, as did over half of the women. They state that suicide of someone, who did not commit murder, is an outburst of aggression toward oneself, only because he had no opportunity to kill the person responsible for his anger, or he had moral stipulations, which prevented him from killing this person. West (1965) points out that the aggressive need is at times equally divided between the impulse to kill and the impulse to commit suicide, so that meaningless circumstances or factors can tip the scale either way. Morselli (1882) also states that suicide and murder represent alternative results of a common factor, which is expressed once this way and once that. In Criminal Appeal 46/54 (1955), which is widely quoted in this chapter, we find a direct quotation of the accused words, "I asked her, 'Mazal, what have I done to you, that you want to destroy my life with one blow?' This time she saw my weakness, and said clearly, mocking, 'We are finished - what's so terrible? It happens in the best families.' I felt awful despair and thought of taking my life. I felt cheated. I was deliberately cheated to destroy me. My honor was trampled. I imagined that other guy walking around, laughing at me and gloating. Suddenly, I shook off those thoughts, and decided: No! I won't kill myself. I will save my honor, whatever the price. I had an inner war, should I kill her or not? Is she guilty or not? I finally decided in my heart that she was guilty of everything, that my honor will not become dust! I caught her by the neck and started strangling her."

The aim of murder, like suicide, is to get rid of the problem and not necessarily of the victim. The alternatives, considered by the killer, include murder and suicide, especially when the murder is romantically oriented. It is difficult to know what motivates one to kill and another to commit suicide.

Closing Statement

Any decision, and specifically the decision to kill, is the result of both rational and emotional processes. In some cases the rational part is "in control," and then it is cold-blooded murder. Sometimes the rational is flooded by emotions, and the decision is reached in a deeper, more primitive part of the brain.

The decision to kill, significant and different as may be, is probably reached by a process of decision-making, which is not basically different from the process of any other decision, simple or complex, peripheral or central, in a person's life.

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(H) = in Hebrew.

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