

Excerpts from an interview between Haim Topol and Avner Horowitz, of blessed memory, an Israeli Air Force pilot, who was killed last year when his airplane crashed.

"I know of no instances in which our men tried to avoid contacts with the enemy's airforce. One is normally afraid of the unknown. Now I am not particularly worried; I have experience. There was constant fire, but I was aware that there were no hits. I'm not afraid; I don't remember being frightened; you focus on your objective; that's your job.

Topol: When the anti-aircraft is in operation - and I have a specific case in mind - the MIG pilots avoid direct fire, whereas you - the Israeli pilots - fly directly into the fire. How do you explain this? Is it courage, training, dedication to your purpose?

Avner: It is simply facing up to our reality. I can't permit myself the luxury of avoiding the target area because of anti-aircraft. Because I have to help the men at the Suez Canal and in the Golan Heights. I must produce results. I have to take the into account. I always have these men in mind. I have to produce results. I don't fly merely to have someone say "Avner scored a hit." I do it for the State of Israel - for the sake of the men who depend on me."

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From "M'Ever L'Nahar" (Beyond the River) - A book in memory of Moty Hadash, of Kibbutz Kinneret, born 1949; was killed in army action against Arab terrorists in 1969.

A letter from Moty's father, Shmuelik to his son, Moty.

"Shalom, my son. I have a strange feeling while I write to you, since the course of our life never gave us opportunity to communicate through letters. However, I think that at your age, there is an opportunity, through correspondence, to explain things and thoughts for which, in the daily life at home, there was no time.

Your mind is generally open to see, to hear and understand things. During the recent years, you no doubt have thought about our life style as a family in a larger group. I can't boast of ourselves as being at the height of fulfillment, but it seems to me that we have the will, despite all the difficulties, to give everything that we have to the large group and society in which we live - - to give of our ability, dedication and loyalty both in our daily work and in public affairs. You certainly have thought about the fact that there are members among us who, out of passivity, out of a lack of participation, tend to take but not to give back. To the degree that the number of members who will be prepared to give of themselves to society will increase, our lives will be elevated and enriched in all fields. We never had an opportunity to discuss these things with you in a formal way until now. With your advancement toward maturity (graduation?) and membership in the group, we would like you to enter this type of life with a clear knowledge of the advantage it has over any other form of life, despite all the difficulties bound up with it. We would like to see you assume the responsibility of work in the 'Anaf' out of knowledge and without personal calculations, to assume the tasks of the social group, among the youth and in general. You witnessed, more than once, how I fought the battle of the movement, here in our home. Many members, because of daily difficulties, forget to a large degree, that an isolated collective settlement

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has no right to exist and will petrify in a short time, because of its provincialism and internal strife. Only the movement which guards its values and principles, and mobilizes its members for pioneering tasks which concretize the great values of cooperation, of building the land and its defense, can preserve us so that we do not change to a way of life without backbone.

Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the bond with it and to try to accept all its demands. We would very much like to see you as a youth and a man who recognizes the value of the movement and realizes its demands. I don't know if the education you received from us all these years was necessarily the best. It seems to me that we didn't really do anything intentional in this respect. But I strongly believe that good education lies in personal example, and in all the questions that we struggled with and which dealt with the issues of interpersonal relationships, we always tried to conduct ourselves in a way befitting the group. You were present more than once and you saw and absorbed unconsciously. We want very much to see you and all our sons, men of the group who are loyal and will know how to give all of themselves.

You are now 15 years old. I have not had the chance to congratulate you on your birthday. At this opportunity the blessing is a bit long but nevertheless whole-hearted and sincere.

Dad

THAT'S WHAT WE'RE HERE FOR

From a discussion between Shoshanah, at Giv'at Haim, and the friends of her son, Ofer, who was killed in the battle for Jerusalem.

We often talked about the relationships that grow up between soldiers in the army, and afterwards on reserve duty. And he found it difficult to define them. Were they different from the relationships between the children within the group that he grew up in? It was difficult for him to find the right words for it. He said: "It's more than the link between brothers, more than the link between friends, greater than friendship." In fact he couldn't put a name to it. He only knew that the bond was such that he was prepared to give his all for any of the boys with him. Of course, Ofer never imagined for a moment that this might mean someone dying. That's not the way a young man thinks; even older people don't think that way. But he did say: "I know that if I go out on some mission, or if anything happens to me, then my friends will be ready to do as much for me as I would for them." I think this is the thing that's most likely to give a soldier a feeling of confidence, this knowing that there<sup>are</sup> people fighting beside him who are ready to lay down their lives for one another. And when it came to evacuating Ofer when he was wounded, I saw that these same soldiers were ready to die for him if need be. It was only luck that it didn't come to that, but it could have happened, under the circumstances. I was quite certain that these boys never for a moment thought of themselves, or of anything else that might have delayed getting the wounded to safety. And I think that every parent (and you yourselves are all some parent's children) is somewhat involved in what happens to his child. It's not only encouraging, it's consoling for a parent to know that when his son goes off to war, he has this safeguard. I don't know how to express myself exactly here, but if you are sure that each one of you is prepared to lay down his life for the others, then the same feeling is shared by your parents when you go off to fight. And because of the circumstances you live in, no parent will turn round and say, "Don't put yourself in danger." That's what we're here for: it's our duty, and it's our sons' duty.

[ from "The Seventh Day" ]