

How do you fight against non-state organizations, whose militants, zealots, and terrorists hide among, or are sheltered by, the civilian population? How do you use modern, high tech armies against enemies like that, without imposing terrible costs on civilians? And without looking like murderers? What is the value of stopping rocket attacks on Israeli towns and cities? How many civilian deaths are “not disproportionate” to that achievement? (Professor Michael Walzer)

**Fighting Fair** | Gary Rosenblatt reports on Prof. Moshe Halbertal's lecture

...Those on the extreme right say that since the enemy initiated the conflict, hides among its own civilians and targets Israeli civilians, Israel can strike back hard and has no moral responsibility toward the Palestinian civilian population. Those on the extreme left, he continued, say it is wrong for Israel to conduct military operations in areas where Palestinian innocents might be killed. Both arguments, says Halbertal, “are easy solutions, and wrong.” An army has “an obligation to defend its own citizens,” he said, and Israel has a military code of ethics because it wants its army to be victorious and its soldiers to “feel they behaved properly as human beings.”

There are four principles that represent “the spirit of the IDF” and distinguish between “a noble soldier and a war criminal,”:

1. The principle of necessity: force can be used only for the purpose of the mission at hand. Determining what is necessary in completing the military mission is the most basic moral and professional principle and complicated to apply.
2. The principle of distinction: with the ethical soldier targeting only combatants, and not innocents. This is “the opposite of the terrorist,” who insists, in the case of Hamas militants, for example, that every Israeli — man, woman or child — is a combatant and therefore subject to attack.
3. The principle of responsibility: the most complex because it is often the case that when a mission focuses on a legitimate target, there may be collateral damage to innocents. It is justified if you do as much as possible to reduce harm to innocents, like warning civilians to leave their homes or a certain area.
4. The principle of proportionality, is the natural follow-up to the third, namely, how much collateral death, if any, is acceptable morally if you are able to eliminate a prominent target, and by doing so also kill innocents. How many civilian lives should be risked to eliminate a top terrorist leader?

“Micro wars” - where each soldier in combat — not just generals at a central command — must determine on the spot, for example, whether someone on the top of a nearby roof is a combatant or an innocent...

**PLEASE WATCH and LISTEN:**  
<http://makomisrael.org/blog/what-makes-the-idf-moral>

Halbertal points out that only a combatant can be a target. A combatant is someone whose intentional actions are part of a causal chain that will end up threatening or harming Israeli civilians or soldiers.

- Do you agree with Halbertal's definition of a "target"?

Halbertal stresses the Principles of Avoidance of Harm, and Proportionality

- What if this principle puts your own soldiers at risk?

Proportionality:

- Do you agree with Halbertal that the body-count approach is "a silly idea"? Or do you think that Halbertal is mistaken?

**Knocking on the Roof**  
 Much has been made of the way that the IDF “knocks on the roof” of buildings due to be destroyed: A small bomb on the roof is dropped by way of final warning to residents to flee



Adi Nes, Untitled (The Last Supper) (1999) | The Israel Museum, Jerusalem

Adi Nes's famous photographic adaptation of The Last Supper shows us Israeli soldiers at the table

- Take a look at how young they are. How do you imagine them applying the moral instructions of Professor Halbertal?
- With this in mind, what do you think is going through the central character's head?

**I.D.F. Ethics – רוח צה"ל**

The Spirit of the IDF draws on four sources:

- The tradition of the IDF and its military heritage as the Israel Defense Forces.
- The tradition of the State of Israel, its democratic principles, laws and institutions.
- The tradition of the Jewish People throughout their history.
- Universal moral values based on the value and dignity of human life.

<http://www.idf.il/1497-en/Dover.aspx>

