

# Refusing to be Conscripted in the Israeli Military: “We Claim Responsibility for the Political Decisions of Our Young Son, and Our Decision Is—NO!”

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*There is a “crack in the veneer that Israel can just oppress and destroy Palestinian lives forever” is how Lee Camp sums up after interviewing Sivan Tal in [Moment of Clarity](#) about the latter’s decision (along with his wife Dori) to refuse to allow his son to be conscripted in the Israeli military.*

Unlike the [situation](#) in 2017 with their older daughter Hadas, when she herself publicly refused to enlist and spent 60 days in jail, Sivan and Dori Tal are taking a novel approach to the situation with their son Yair. They are saying that, even though their son is 18, they are still his guardians and are taking on the responsibility of refusing for him.

In this way, they are also challenging the implicit collusion of other Jewish Israeli parents with the crimes of the Zionist apartheid regime against Palestinians, even as they acknowledge the enormous social pressures “from all sides” that such a decision entails, not least for their young son.

It’s hard enough these days of the rise of the fascistic spirit for parents to instill humanistic values in their children. But for those living under a Zionist regime like Sivan and Dori, the battle for the soul of their children is one akin to what is described in *The Turn of the Screw*.

In a [study](#) titled ‘Social and Moral Disintegration of the Zionist Family’ in *Journal of Applied Sciences*, Adnan Al-Ahmad writes in the introduction:

The Zionist regime in occupied Palestine is a peculiar sort of regime, for it has no resemblance to any social or political in the world. It is a racial and capricious regime which is based on aggression, militarism, territorial expansion, imperialism, deception and hatred of justice and humanity[1]. A notorious entity like the Zionist regime characterized by all these negative features cannot exist and continue without bringing unlimited sufferings and despair to its own subjects, those of neighboring territories and to the totality of the human race.

Sivan and Dori Tal are outspoken about the harm done to their children through

indoctrination by the Israeli military at a very early age at school, growing up with no understanding or awareness of the involvement of the Israeli military in horrific war crimes as it continues to maintain the colonization and occupation of Palestine.

One can imagine, therefore, the time and effort it took for them to counteract the intense pressures on their children from outside the home.

In the [letter](#) addressed to the conscientious objectors' committee that they posted on Facebook, Sivan and Dori write:

We have raised him [their son Yair] with love, protected him, supported and educated him for 18 years to the universal values that we believe in. Serving in the IDF stands in stark contrast to these values. Yair is not the property of the state, and the state does not have a moral right to forcibly recruit him to an organization that consistently violates international human rights conventions. We believe that it is our moral duty to oppose his enlistment to the IDF. It is our responsibility as parents.

In answer to a question I asked him, Sivan Tal emphasized the following point:

The message we tried to convey in our letter is that our son's willingness or unwillingness to enlist or not is not the issue; we take it out of the equation. Our message is that parents' consent should be mandatory. The Israeli education system and the whole surrounding doesn't make it a viable option for the young high school graduates to refuse (except for a handful of special ones). They are brainwashed and they are put under heavy pressure to go and we need to challenge the system, and we demand that parents have the right to object [on behalf of their children].

In his talk on Moment of Clarity, Sivan Tal says, "I am Jewish, I love the people, I want to make Israel better not stronger; it's strong enough already!" He adds:

Israel is committing crimes against Judaism because it uses Judaism as an excuse for all the atrocities taking place in Israel, which is an apartheid state, but in many ways, it is much worse than ... South Africa, where nobody questions the nativeness [of the Africans there] or their right to be in their homeland. It takes a very twisted mind to think about our immigration from Europe [to Palestine] as a return from 2000 years ago. [Palestinian Arabs] are native and [yet] we object to their right to live in their homeland... They deserve a better future just like us.



The Tal family on vacation [courtesy Sivan Tal]

At the end of the interview, Lee Camp says, “I knew I couldn’t put ‘Israel’ in the title of this video, because it might get banned or suppressed; maybe it’ll still get suppressed but maybe not at the level of having ‘Israel’ in the title. We’re just seeing it endlessly, that type of suppression, holding down those of us who are speaking against these injustices. And we’ve got to keep doing it; we’ve got to keep fighting back. As Sivan said, we should not let them change us at the end of the day. That should really be the goal.”

Yes, we’ve got to keep fighting back. The Tal family has a lot to teach other Israelis and the world.

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Featured image: Lee Camp (left) and Sivan Tal—captured from [Moment of Clarity](#)

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