

Frederick William Dame

THE DUVDEVAN MOTTO

The Israel Defense Forces (צבא ההגנה לישראל, Tsva ha-Hagana le Yisra'el, which means *The Army of Defense for Israel*, is known by the acronym Tzahal (צה"ל). It has a special unit (Unit 217) called the Duvdevan. *Duvdevan* in English means *cherry*. The unit received this nickname because it is above and beyond the traditional importance level of select units of the Israeli Defense Forces. Its hierarchy location is similar to a cherry that sits and ripens at the top of the cherry tree. The Duvdevan members are counter-terrorism agents.¹

It is often stated that the Duvdevan motto is *By way of deception thou shalt do war*. However, this is not true because it is a false translation and application. The real motto of Duvdevan comes from Proverbs 24:6. In Hebrew, we read:

כִּי בַתְּחִבָּלוֹת, תַּעֲשֶׂה-לָךְ מִלְחָמָה; וּתְשׁוּעָה, בְּרֵב יוֹעֵץ.

The Latin cleanup transcription text is:

kiy b'tahbīlevt, tia'ešh'h-līka ml̄hamah; viṭsh 'vi'eah, bīrb yev'eṭes.

which translated correctly into English means

For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war:

and in the multitude of counselors there is safety.²

¹ <https://www.revolvy.com/page/Duvdevan-Unit>, accessed 26 September 2019.

² <https://www.mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt2824.htm>, accessed 26 September 2019. The King James Version of the Bible has this translation: "For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war: and in multitude of counsellors there is safety." Some translations have *strength* for *multitude*.

Already in 1706 the Welsh non-conformist minister Matthew Henry (1662-1714) wrote the following unrefutable, logical commentary on Proverbs 24:6 in his work *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments* (1706-1710):

"Wisdom will erect a college or council of state. Wisdom will be of use, [1.] For the managing of the public quarrels, so as not to engage in them but for an honest cause and with some probability of success, and, when they are engaged in, to manage them well, and so as to make either an advantageous peace or an honourable retreat: *By wise counsel thou shalt make war*, which is a thing that may prove of ill consequence if not done by wise counsel. [2.] For the securing of the public peace: *In the multitude of counsellors there is safety*, for one may foresee the danger, and discern the advantages, which another cannot. In our spiritual conflicts we need wisdom, for our enemy is subtle."³

Between 1748 and 1763 the English Baptist minister and biblical scholar John Gill (1697-1771) wrote his *Exposition of the Old Testament*. John Gill substantiated Matthew Henry's commentary as follows:

"Counsel, as well as strength, is necessary for war: kings and states, before they enter on a war, should not only well consider the justness of their cause, but should consult whether they have a sufficiency of men and money to carry it on; and should concert the wisest methods to attack the enemy, or defend themselves; and, above all, should ask counsel of God; (see 2 Kings 18:20; Luke 14:31; and Luke 14:32). And this is true of our spiritual warfare with sin, Satan, the world, and false teachers; which requires not only strength to wage war with them, but wise counsel, that we may be able to understand and guard against

³ Consult <https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/matthew-henry-complete/proverbs/24.html>, accessed 26 September 2019.

their cunning, wiles, and stratagems: and this is principally to be asked of God, who is wonderful in counsel; and of good and experienced men, skilled in those matters; *and in the multitude of counsellors [there is] safety*; to take the advice of wise counsellors, and many of them, even among men, is safe for princes and states, in the above case and in all others; and especially to ask and take counsel of God, who gives wisdom liberally to them that ask it; and of Christ, the Wonderful Counsellor; and from the Scriptures, whom David made his counsellors; and from old experienced Christians, and ministers of the word, with whom are wisdom, counsel, and understanding(.)"⁴

The Duvdevan motto is often stated as *By way of deception thou shalt do war*. This is not correct. *By way of deception thou shalt do war* is an adaptation of Muhammad's statement, *War is deceit*.⁵ Muhammad's statement is not comparable to the Duvdevan motto because Muhammad considered himself to be the only counseling he needed and any aspect or program of deceit he needed would be a result of his megalomaniacal fits that would take place when he communicated with Allah via the angel Gabriel.

Victor Ostrovsky (born in 1949), a former Mossad case officer, and Claire Hoy, in their book *By Way of Deception*⁶ claim that Mossad's motto is *By way of deception, thou shalt do war*. This is not correct either. Israel's Security Service Mossad has the motto from Proverbs 11:14. We read in Hebrew:

⁴ See <https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/proverbs-24-6.html>, accessed 26 September 2019.

⁵ <https://muflihun.com/bukhari/52/269>, accessed 26 September 2019.

⁶ Victor Ostrovsky and Claire Hoy, *By Way of Deception*, St. Martins Press, New York: 1990, p. 53..

בְּאֵין תַּחְבֻּלוֹת, יִפֹּל-עַם; וּתְשׁוּעָה, בְּרַב יוֹעֵץ.

The Latin cleanup transcription text is:

biayen tiahbīlevt, ypial-'eam; vitsh'vi'eah, birb yev'e'es.

which translated correctly into English means

*Where no wise direction is, a people falleth;
but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.*⁷

This is sometimes given as *Where no counsel is, the people fall, but in the multitude of counselors there is safety.*⁸

Matthew Henry's comment to Mossad's motto is as follows:

"1. The bad omen of a kingdom's ruin: *Where no counsel is*, no consultation at all, but every thing (sic) done rashly, or no prudent consultation for the common good, but only caballing for parties and divided interests, *the people fall*, crumble into factions, fall to pieces, fall together by the ears, and fall an easy prey to their common enemies. Councils of war are necessary to the operations of war; two eyes see more than one; and mutual advice is in order to mutual assistance. 2. The good presage of a kingdom's prosperity: *In the multitude of counsellors*,⁹ that see their need one of another, and act in concert and with concern for the public welfare, *there is safety*; for what prudent methods one discerns not another may. In our private

⁷ <https://www.mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt2811.htm>, accessed 26 September 2019.

⁸ <https://www.mossad.gov.il/eng/about/Pages/default.aspx> and http://www.channel4.com/news/articles/world/middle_east/who-knows-israelaposs+mossad/3549937.html, both accessed 26 September 2019.

⁹ The spelling counsellors (double l) is British English. Where a British text is quoted, I have kept the British spelling. Counselors with a single l is American spelling.

affairs we shall often find it to our advantage to advise with many; if they agree in their advice, our way will be the more clear; if they differ, we shall hear what is to be said on all sides, and be the better able to determine."¹⁰

John Gill's commentary on Mossad's motto is:

"Where there is no wise and prudent, sound and good counsel, as the word signifies; where that is not, there had as good be none, or better; a people, a kingdom, a commonwealth, nation, or city, fall into ruin and destruction, or into schemes which bring them to it; they are like a ship without a pilot, or without a helm, or one to steer it: the Targum, Syriac, and Vulgate Latin versions, render it,

"where there is no governor;"

and the Arabic version,

"they that have no providence (or forecast) fall as a leaf falls;"

and so the Septuagint version,

"they that have no government fall as leaves,"

as leaves fall in autumn; and the word signifies the helm of government {o}, in allusion to a ship; **but in the multitude of counsellors [there is] safety**; because what one may miss another may hit upon; and, if they agree in their advice, it may be the more depended upon; and, if not, yet their different sentiments being compared together, and the reasons of them, a person may the better judge which is best to follow, and what is fit to be done: it may be rendered, "in the greatness" or "largeness of a counsellor", for the word is in the singular number; that is, in the large capacity or endowments of a counsellor; in one that is abundantly qualified for a counsellor; whose abilities are not to be questioned; in the advice of such an (sic) one a man may safely confide; and who that answers to this character as Jesus Christ, the wonderful Counsellor? in whose counsel we may rest with the greatest

¹⁰ <https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/matthew-henry-complete/proverbs/11.html>, accessed 26 September 2019.

safety; and which may be found in his (sic) word, in the Scriptures, which David says should be the men of his counsel, (Psalms 119:24; see Isaiah 9:6 and 28:9)."¹¹

Undoubtedly, Mossad's motto and that of Duvdevan (Unit 217) are closely related, but both have the qualification that wise counsel from other parties is necessary.

Although Muhammad's statement *war is deceit* is from Bukhari's Hadith,¹² Muhammad absolves himself from any ethical or moral wrongdoing by saying in the Koran, mainly in Suras 3:54, 8:30, 10:21, that the best deceiver is Allah. The revelations in the Koran testify to the importance of taqiyya, the use of deceit. Muhammad claims that Allah is the revealer of these verses. Therefore, Allah perpetrates deceit.

To say as Muhammad did that *war is deceit* is the formulation by a bounder (a vulgar man) or a cad (a non-gentleman) and, not a man of honor. For Muhammad, no wise counseling was necessary. He was his counsel. Muhammad needed none other than his megalomaniacal hallucinations of dialogue with Allah via the angel Gabriel.

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Patriotic, Steadfast, and True
September 28, 2019.

¹¹ <https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/proverbs-11-14.html>, accessed 26 September 2019.

¹² It is also in the Sahih Muslim Hadith, Book 032, Number 6303.