

**This Land is My Land**  
**A Breslov Perspective on the Holy Land**  
**Essay #11—Parshat Eikev 5761**

“Because God is bringing you to a good Land...you should eat, be sated and bless God for the good Land He has given you” (Deuteronomy 8:7-10).

We’ve been through Tisha b’Av and Shabbat Nachamu. We’ve seen suffering and experienced consolation. But... “This world,” when depicted by Hollywood and on television, tells us that after nearly an hour of trouble, frustration and danger (with 20 minutes off for commercials), everything works out fine and everyone lives happily ever after. So if we’ve already reached “Nachamu—Be consoled,” why there are more frustrations. Shouldn’t the consolation make us live “happily ever after?”

Rebbe Nachman once spoke to his followers. He said that despite the salvation we often see, in the final analysis there seems to always be more suffering, depression and frustration. Then he commented: “People say that there is a “This World,” and that there is a “World to Come.” We all believe that the World to Come exists. Now it could be, maybe, there is such a place as “This World,” somewhere. But,” he continued, “This World looks more like a Gehenna” (*Likutey Moharan II*, 119).

So if This World doesn’t exist—or it’s not here because of the suffering that keeps us from experiencing—what hope could there be for us? Why is it that when we cry on Tisha b’Av at the Kotel, we have to have stones and glass thrown upon us? Why do two women who walk past an Arab get stabbed (as happened in Jerusalem last week)? What’s so special about bombs that Palestinian murderers place them in public places to blow people to smithereens? The situation—This World—seems so depressing, it makes you want to just sit down and *krekhtz* (sigh).

Not *kvetch* (complain; the *k* is vocalized). No. God forbid. That’s a waste of time and nobody gains anything from kvetching. People even stop listening to the *kvetch*. But, we should *krekhtz*. We must *krekhtz*. Sit back and breathe deeply. What else is there to do? So sit and sigh. And sigh again. And sigh even more deeply. For, what else can we do? The least that can happen is that you perform vital breathing exercises, that can help your blood flow and can stimulate your mind, for these exercises increase the oxygen content of your brain so you don’t go brain dead. Because the response to the frustrating news is that there’s plenty of reason to aspire to be brain-dead. Why face the realities of This World? But... Is this what Creation was for? Can anyone really think that God created this world just for us to sit back and sigh in frustration? Is this why we were given the Holy Land, to *krekhtz* about the situation? Or, should we look to our sighing over frustrations as an opportunity to breathe new life into the situation? Rebbe Nachman taught:

“See how precious is the *krekhtz* of a Jewish person. It provides wholeness in place of lack. For through breath, which is the *ruach* of life, the world was created as is written, “By the *ruach* of His mouth, their entire hosts were created” (*Psalms* 33:6). (*Ruach* translates as breath, wind and spirit. All these translations can apply in the lesson.) The renewal of the world (the Resurrection) will also come about by means of the *ruach* as in, “You will send Your *ruach*, they will be created; You renew the face of the earth” (*ibid.* 104:30). This *ruach* is also the vital force of human life. This is because man’s breath is his life-force as is written, “[God] breathed into his nostrils the breath of life” (*Genesis* 2:7). We find then that the quintessential life-force of everything is its *ruach*. Whenever a lack exists, it is

essentially in the life-force, which corresponds to the *ruach* of life of that thing. This is because it is the *ruach* which gives that thing its existence—And sighing is the extension of the breath—when a person sighs over the lack—he draws *ruach* of life to that which he is lacking—Thus, through the sigh, the lack is made whole.”

(*Likutey Moharan I*, 8)

Rebbe Nachman then explains where the source of this *ruach* is. Those who seek God, their *ruach* is drawn through the tzaddikim, who in turn draw it directly from the Torah. Those who seek spirituality, when they sigh deeply over their sufferings they draw this *ruach* to complete what they are lacking in spirit and zeal, arousing their passions for positive living, to perfect themselves and to grow spiritually and to inherit the World to Come. But those who seek This World cannot draw their life force from the Torah/tzaddikim, for that life-force is a long-term *ruach*, an eternal life-force. Those who seek short-term material benefit cannot be connected to it. Their source of *ruach* is Esav. Esav is called *ish seir* (man from Seir) and **SeiR** connotes **SaaRah**, a storm-wind, an overly powerful *ruach*. Thus, those who cannot draw their *ruach* from the tzaddik, draw their life-force from Esav. Why Esav, the “material man, the storm-wind man?” Because, a storm wind blows for a short while and quickly passes. The material world, This World, passes us by quite quickly. Those who draw their life-force from Esav, have a short duration of existence.

We can compare the history of the life-force of Israel, who draw from the tzaddik, to that of the nations, who draw their life-force from Esav. We’ve been around for some 3,700 years, since our Patriarch Abraham. We have been making positive contributions to This World ever since, as well as being a light unto the nations and the pathfinder for the World to Come.

Contrast that with the past of the nations, whole empires and civilizations which have risen—and fallen. Some endured a mere few hundred years, others had a meteoric rise followed by an equally rapid descent. These are the ones who draw their life force from Esav, the storm-wind, the powerful storm which blows hard and destroys too many things in its path—but eventually peters out and completely disappears.

So the situation is depressing. Because it is This World. But, if we take heart, we find that these problems are passing problems, they are the result of Esav (Yishmael’s son-in-law; *Genesis* 28:9). Therefore, we must sit back and *krekhtz*. We must sigh and groan and draw a long, hard, deep breath to re-attach ourselves to the tzaddik, to the Torah, to God. By doing so, we draw **OUR** eternal life-force which counters and combats the life-force of Esav and we attain the patience to wait the storm out. We have survived the Tisha b’Avs of the past: the Babylonian, Persian, Greek and Roman exiles, the various Crusades, the Spanish Inquisition, Chmelnitzky massacres and the Holocaust. We will also survive the Arab onslaught against innocent human beings, against women and children and against the Holy Land.

But for the moment we’ve got “the sigh.” So sit back, relax, breath deeply. Sigh and sigh some more. Sigh over the destruction of the Temple, the slaughter of innocent people. Don’t forget to do it. Then what’s missing in our lives can be completed. The inner calm, the outward peace. Because, the more we sigh, the more we effectively counter the “Mid-eastern storm wind” of Arabia. After all, whose Land is it?

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