

# This Land is My Land

## A Breslov Perspective on the Holy Land

### Essay #50—Parshat Mishpatim 5762

"*V'Eileh HaMishpatim...*" These are the laws that you shall place before them." Rashi explains that just as the Ten Commandments were given at Sinai, so too, the civil law detailed in this week's Torah reading was also given at Sinai. That's good. Really good. Because, otherwise, we would have to live our lives with the civil law imposed upon us by the governments and "civilizations" of the world. You may ask, since each country has its civil law which works, more or less. What's so terrible if we have civil law dictated to us by governments "of the people, by the people..." or governments which are dictatorial, ruled by monarchs or despots, or by elected officials who live off the public's "non-kosher" barrels etc. So what if they make up civil law as they go along; it's intended for the public welfare!

**Dateline: May 1967.** Egypt demands that the UN peace-keeping forces stationed in the Sinai desert (since 1956) be removed. U Thant, then Director General of the United Nations, promptly agrees, opening the way for Egyptian troops to mass on the borders of Israel. Syria and Jordan, as well as other Arab nations, gleefully await the moment the war they declared against Israel can begin. Thank God, to their total disbelief as well as to our relief, the war is history.

Yet, that war still has repercussions. Since 1967, the United Nations, which began the war by pulling out its troops and helping the Arabs wage war, has been demanding compensation from the Israelis for its property damaged in Israel during the 1967 war. Such is "civil law" as dictated by "civilization"! As dictated by people, human beings, who are devoid of spiritual and emotional decency. You start a war, you wage a war - Indian troops stationed with the UN forces remained in the Sinai desert and helped the Arabs. Then you demand - yes, demand! - compensation for property *you* caused to be ruined. Civilization. Well, maybe, just maybe, the world has matured a little bit and one shouldn't be so skeptical about such decent, upright folks. Right? Think again.

**Dateline: January, 2002.** The European Union (EU) has asked Israel for \$17,000,000 (seventeen million US dollars - not Eurodollars) in compensation for damage sustained by the projects it has funded in the Palestinian Authority. Who damaged these projects? The murderous Palestinian intifada.

One would have to take some 100 Ecstasy pills just to dream that one up, let alone to actually think he'd be taken seriously. But, serious they are. They funded a war-mongering Arafat. Throughout the year and a half of continuous murder and murder attacks (aside from all the other attacks prior to this murderous intifada), the EU has supported the Palestinian efforts of striving for the "peace process." They have pumped millions of dollars into the Palestinian Authority for projects that were sidetracked because the PA used the money to purchase arms to murder innocent civilians. Still, the EU has maintained its goal is a working "peace process" in the Middle East. Now they claim, since the Jews are reluctant to continue *piece* talks with a war-mongering thug, the Israelis are responsible for the damage to their heavily one-sided and accented "peace process." Therefore, Israel should pay the EU compensation. It's like

Hitler demanding the Jews pay for the Zyklon-B gas he used in the gas chambers!

This is "civil law" used by civilizations, throughout the world. So, thank God, we were given a Torah, with our civil law stating that it is the injured party which has the right to claim compensation and *not* the thief, the murderer, the instigator or the supporter of evil.

In addition, the Talmud teaches that we have a right to claim damages for all that was done to us by the thieves, the murderers, the instigators and their supporters throughout the millennia of our existence. In fact, right now, God is checking the "books" and "preparing" the charges to be levied. We need only look in the Book of Isaiah and those of the other prophets to see how much wealth, wealth and of every type of success and prosperity awaits us and which we will be paid in the very, very, near future, when Mashiach comes, hopefully today. Amen. But there's more.

This week's Torah reading states, "If a fire gets out of control and spreads through the weeds and continues to burn in another's field, the one who started the fire must make restitution and pay compensation" (*Exodus 22:5*). The Talmud comments (*Bava Kama 60b*), "A fire out of control" refers to our sins which caused the "fire of God" to burn and bring about the destruction of the Temple and the subsequent exiles and suffering of the Jews. Still, God is the One Who made that fire! So it is God Himself promising us that He will make full restitution for all our suffering. But what can we do to arouse His compassion that He will make this payment now, rather than holding onto our CDs (continuous delays) which carry penalties for early withdrawal? For this we have to look towards the end of the *parshah* (*Exodus 23:20-33*).

"I am sending My angel to protect you on the way and to lead you to the place that I have prepared...Do not worship their idols...serve God and I will bless your bread and water and remove illness from you...you will live out your lives in full...I will cause your enemies to flee from you. I will chase them out slowly...until you increase and can occupy the entire Land...Your borders shall be from the Red Sea to the Philistine Sea, from the [Sinai] desert until the [Euphrates] River...Do **NOT** make a covenant with those who dwell in the Land...."

Rashi explains that Moshe refused the angel (*Exodus 33:15*). He insisted that God and God alone accompany the Jews, that we not be placed under the jurisdiction of any angel, no matter how great. A large request, especially when one realizes that God Himself chose to send an angel with us. We offer the following explanation.

Moshe was a true leader. He knew that for the Jews to reach the Holy Land, they required nothing less than God's Divine providence. He did not agree that the Jews would be able to function properly under the guidance of even the most "well-meaning" angel, i.e., even the most compassionate, decent, civilized person. For all civilizations, if they do not live as they should under God's direct rule, are subject to the vanities of "civilization." They may ascend to the greatest heights, but eventually descend to the lowest depths of deceit, treachery, murder, genocide and despotism. Thus Moshe prayed, pleaded and even demanded from God that He not abandon us to an angel, lest we become victims.

Moshe insisted that God Himself lead us, that God Himself hover over us in order that we should experience His Presence. This way, we won't fall victim to rationalizations that peace can be made with murderers, that compensation be paid to those who extol terrorists, that if we "serve the idols" which are made of imaginary declarations of peace that we can safely live our lives. No! Moshe knew that we must serve God and seek His Presence at all times, in all situations. Then, only then, will we live full lives.

Then, only then, will we have our Land, the Land from the Red Sea to Euphrates River. And then, God will recompense us for all the suffering we have endured. Then we will have real PEACE. May it happen speedily, in our time, Amen.

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