

# This Land is My Land

## A Breslov Perspective on the Holy Land

### Essay #57—Parshat Tzav/Shabbat HaGadol 5762

**Dateline: March 14, 2002:** U.S. President Bush, in the midst of the fiercest attacks yet against Taliban terrorists in Afghanistan, 10,000 miles away from his home, took the time out to express his concern about Arab terrorism in Israel. The "even-handed" president said, "Frankly, it is not helpful [to the peace efforts] what the Israelis have recently done."

We have literally been brutally blown away by Arab terrorists in recent weeks. Instead of doing what should have been done immediately—entering the terrorists' lairs and blowing them up, as America is doing to its enemies 10,000 miles away—we are only now first trying to control the terror. Yet the president finds it necessary to admonish us for Arab terrorist deeds. Welcome to the world of honesty, decency, even-handed diplomacy and human rights.

And, since peace is such a sought after item in the Middle East, the President has sent us both Vice-President Cheney and chief peace mediator Anthony Zinni to help us reach a decision how to implement a lasting peace when Arab murderers seek every which way to kill more and more people. Those Arabs are like sharks; once they've tasted human blood, go into a frenzy for more.

But what can one ask of the Arabs? Since they have begun randomly killing as many Jews as possible, they have brought it upon themselves that no Jew wants to employ them. So, without income, imposed upon themselves—because of themselves—they get desperate, desperate enough to commit even more suicides, as long as they can murder as many Jews as possible along with themselves. Then they receive "death insurance" from Iraq and Saudi Arabia, some \$15,000, with which they can support their families postmortem.

What would happen if the Iraqis and Saudis would pay out the money *before* the suicide, to maintain the dignity of the murderous Arab? Jewish blood would not be spilled. So, they opt to support death and destruction, knowing that the US President will admonish Israel for the despicable acts of the Arabs.

Anyway, rumor here in Israel has it that the president is beginning to get worried about our financial situation—no tourists, no pilgrimages for Pesach, etc. Who knows? Maybe we'll also get desperate and start fighting the Arabs like we should have been all these months at least to restore the economy (since the local government has yet to show interest in its citizens). So, rumor has it that President Bush has sent both Cheney and Zinni to show the world that it is safe to visit Israel, in order to bolster our economy. Maybe more tourists will come for Pesach. Maybe it's part of his economic recovery package which he sent to Congress.

Anyway, it's almost *Shabbat HaGadol*, the "great Shabbat," commemorating the miracle in Egypt. The ancient Egyptians worshipped the sheep, which is the first sign of the zodiac. The Jews were commanded to take the Egyptian idol and sacrifice it before God. A discomfiting, even discouraging thought if one wants to maintain a quiet situation or nurture a peace process, especially with one's master (for the Jews

were still in bondage). Still, it was God's commandment and the Jews fulfilled it.

Now, the commandment to take a sheep for sacrifice was to be performed on the 10th of Nissan, which that year fell on Shabbat. The Jews, fulfilling God's commandment, though they might have had misgivings, took the sheep on that Shabbat. Lo and behold! Nothing happened. The Egyptians—and their media—remained quiet. They said not a word. They were silent, they could not say anything. This was because God had given the order and the Jews, with great self-sacrifice, did what they had to do.

Well, it's not entirely accurate to say "nothing happened." In fact, a great miracle happened. It was contrary to anything the Egyptians would have thought or said or would do. On account of our adherence to God and His commandment the Other Side remained silent. This is the miracle of Shabbat HaGadol we recall. Why is the Shabbat before Pesach designated as the day for recalling this miracle, rather than the 10th of Nissan? As we have seen (*Likutey Moharan* I, Lesson #57; see [essay #49](#) where this is discussed in detail) **ShaBbaT** contains the power to "*l'haShBiT oyeiv* - to conquer one's enemies." Thus, we celebrate *Shabbat HaGadol*, hoping to invoke its merit and defeat our enemies.

Most years, Shabbat HaGadol will coincide with the Torah reading of Tzav, the second *parshah* of the Book of Vayikra (Leviticus). Paralleling the self-sacrifice the Jews had in Egypt, Tzav discusses the laws of sacrifices. Generally, sacrifices were ordained for one who wanted to offer something to God of his own free will. This is an element of self-sacrifice. However, even sacrifices that were offered for atonement contained an element of self-sacrifice; it's never easy to admit a mistake, let alone to go public before the priests by bringing a sacrifice which "announces" that one has sinned.

We are approaching Pesach, a festival which contains all the elements of self-sacrifice one could ask for. We must do away with our *chametz* (leavened foods), slaving as we did in Egypt, to clean every niche and corner of our homes of all the forbidden foods. We must "overhaul" the kitchen so that it will be kosher for Passover. We go on a spending spree to purchase foods we are unaccustomed to eating a whole year. We eat no bread, only matzah, which can come at a price that only the rich and famous would brag about. We need lots of wine and many other expensive foods. The expenses also include new clothes for everyone in the family, and perhaps jewelry for some as well. To top it all off (for American Jewry), Pesach always falls out when the IRS demands its yearly tribute, so that there's no money left over for Yom Tov (festival).

Who can forget years past when the blood libels would take place, haunting the Jewish communities of Europe? Who can forget the taunting of the Jews—"you are a free people?!"—when their neighbors would often rally around them making mockery of their observance of the Torah, whilst they were subjugated to the worse sufferings and taxation by the gentile countrymen and governments?

All this is because Pesach represents the beginning of the Jewish people as a sovereign nation, something the nations have never been able to swallow. How can a nation survive without its own land, without a country it can call its own? How can such a heritage exist if the people are scattered to the four corners of the globe? Yet, where are the Babylonians of old? Where are the other ancient civilizations? Where are the superpowers of the medieval age? Where is Prussia, the Austria-Hungary alliance? Where is Spain, of Inquisition fame? We still exist and still make our mark upon civilization?! Yes, because our existence defies all manner of survival by the other nations.

So, preparing for Pesach coincides with the sacrifices, with self-sacrifice. And it coincides with Shabbat HaGadol, a Shabbat of miracles, a **ShaBbaT** which can *l'haShBiT* our enemies. It can silence the media,

presidents, peace envoys and every other natural ways and means of imposing peace upon a nation whose very existence and survival is supernatural. It is for us to realize our own *raison-d'etre*, to know that God loves us and wants us to grow and improve our lives, to seek and find the inner happiness and peace to which we, as Jews, are entitled (as discussed in [last week's essay](#)).

Doing so will perhaps increase our chances for another *Shabbat HaGadol*, for a cessation of hostilities by the hostile parties and a deafening silence on the part of all the noisemakers who clamor for our "peaceful concessions" to their idolatries and their ideologies. Then we can truly merit to see what an Exodus is really all about, Amen.

God willing, next week's essay will discuss Rebbe Nachman's peace plan—as opposed to the plans suggested by others whom I wouldn't want to mention in the same breath—and how it can be implemented in these trying times.

Have a good one,  
Chaim.

Copyright © 2002, Breslov Research Institute

---

- [Home](#)
- [This Land is My Land Table of Contents](#)
- [Essay #56](#)
- [Essay #58](#)