

This Land is My Land

A Breslov Perspective on the Holy Land

Essay #61 — Parshat Acharei Mot-Kedoshim 5762

Welcome to the month of Iyyar, a month of healing. It always comes at that time of year when the denizens of the Vegetable Kingdom begin to blossom and bear fruit. Among the qualities contained within this kingdom is the curative powers of many flowers and herbs. Thus, Iyyar always brings with it the promise of healing for our physical aches and pains. As it brings healing, emotional, spiritual and even financial health can follow in its wake. Rebbe Nachman writes:

"All cures come from the earth. Therefore, when the earth gives forth its yield, instilling strength in all the trees and plants—i.e., at the time of ripening, during the month of Iyyar—then all the cures have greater potency, for that is when the earth suffuses them with strength. At others times, however, even if one were to take those very same cures, they would not have this potency. This is the reason we take cures during the month of Iyyar, which is [usually] May.

Foremost is the Land of Israel, for all the lands receive from the residue of the Land of Israel (*Taanit* 10a). And the Land of Israel has two aspects: there are times when it is called "the Land of Kanaan," and other times when it is called simply "the Land." That is, when there is dispute, it is called "the Land of Kanaan," the aspect of *kan ani*; as our Sages, of blessed memory, commented on the verse (*Zachariah* 14:21) "there will not be **KaN aNI**" – there will not be **KaN ANI** (a poor person here) (*Pesachim* 50a). Thus Kanaan represents poverty, "a poor person here." This is caused by dispute, for one dispute thwarts one hundred livelihoods....

However, when there is peace, it is called simply "the Land." Then, it is the aspect of "the Land will give forth its yield" (*Psalms* 67:7)—it gives its strength to all the earth's yield, and so all the cures are potent.

Therefore, the [Hebrew] letters of **IYYaR** form an acronym of "*Oyevai Yashuvu Yeivoshu Raga* (My enemies will turn back; they will be instantly shamed)" (*Psalms* 6:11). For Iyyar is when there are cures, an aspect of peace, the aspect of "the Land will give forth its yield." This is the opposite of dispute, the aspect of the Land of Kanaan (*Likutey Moharan* I, Lesson #277:3).

There we have it. A month that is propitious for healing: of body, of soul, of spiritual ills and financial wounds. It is the month when the manna, heavenly food, began to descend to the Jews in the desert, almost 30 days after their exit from Egypt.

However, we have to give Iyyar a chance to take effect, for Iyyar is also the month in which most of the Omer-count takes place (see *Leviticus* 23:15-16). Reb Noson writes that one of the lessons of the Omer-count is to make us aware that each day is meaningful. Not only each day, but each act, each

thought, each spoken word plays a major role in the outcome of our lives (*Likutey Halakhot, Pikadon* 4:5)!

Dateline: USA, April, 2002. President Bush, the world's "leading terrorist fighter" demands that *Israel* stop protecting itself from the Palestinians. "IMMEDIATELY," he said. "It is Iyyar," I thought. "Not we, but our enemies. They will 'turn back' - 'instantly,' immediately."

Dateline: Israel, April 2002. We have been treated to a visit by none other than Colin Powell, Secretary of State of the United States, the world's leading terrorist fighter. Sadly, he has not learned from his own failures. His premature cancellation of the Gulf War allows Saddam Hussein to promote global terrorism to this day. Someone who fails to learn from such a serious mistake will certainly be "shamed"—"instantly."

The Chafetz Chaim (Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan [1840-1933], aka Mishnah Berurah), author of many *halakhic* and moral works, once posed the following question. "After millennia of various forms of totalitarian/autocratic governments, why has God inserted democracies and republics into world history?" His answer was simple and direct. "In the Messianic age, God will judge the subjects of all the nations for the evil deeds they perpetrated against the Jews. The people will attempt to vindicate themselves. 'God! We were subjects of totalitarian regimes! We had no choice but to follow the dictates of our rulers! We were only following orders!' Therefore," said the Chafetz Chaim, "the world's population has been given a chance to redeem themselves. As citizens of democratic societies, they can freely choose to support God's Chosen Nation, or not."

The Palestinian people freely voted for Arafat. Will that help their future verdict? Will it help those world leaders who continually keep him propped up? Soon, very soon we hope, Mashiach will arrive. Then our "enemies will turn back; they will be instantly shamed" of their choices and their crimes.

What do *we* do in the meantime? We can start with what's in this week's Torah reading: "Arise before the aged...Do not hurt the proselyte's feelings...love the stranger in your midst...Do not falsify measurements, whether in length, weight or volume...I am God Who took you out of Egypt..." (*Leviticus* 19:32-37). Rashi explains, "One who deals dishonestly in business causes the following: He makes the Land [of Israel] impure; he desecrates God's Name; he causes the Divine Presence to depart from the Jews; he brings death [e.g., by suicide bombers] and causes them to be exiled from their Land" (v. 35). Basically, Rashi is saying: It's up to us. We have to respect our elders, act kindly to others and deal honestly in business.

If such will be the case, "the Land will bear fruit." As Rebbe Nachman teaches, the Land's curative powers will "extend into the fruits, healing will abound." With the Land giving forth its fruits as it should, people will live in good health and financial security. People will reap the benefits of healing in a more secure emotional environment and their spiritual well-being, their awareness of God, will increase. And peace will reign. Amen.

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