

This Land is My Land

A Breslov Perspective on the Holy Land

Essay #62—Parshat Emor 5762

The reading of Emor contains the mitzvah of Sefirat HaOmer (Counting of the Omer). We count 49 days from Pesach until Shavuot, each day counted separately. Reb Noson teaches that one of the lessons to be learned from this mitzvah is: Every single day of life counts; each and every moment of life is important—extremely important—and we must learn to make each moment count. We must use each day properly, as best as we can. We have to "squeeze" as much out of life as we can, appreciate what we have and long for more—more spiritual success, and more and better thoughts and ideas of how to get the most spirituality out of life. Obviously, this is most easily accomplished through Torah study and prayer. The more one delves into the study of God's Will (the Torah) the more knowledge he has of what God wants from him. The more one prays to God to fulfill that Torah, the closer he draws to Him (*Likutey Halakhot, Pikadon 4*).

These ideas apply not only to you, but to each and every Jew. If every moment of one Jew counts, then every Jew counts. He (and she) is very important. Here is an example where we can actually see the difference in how each Jew counts.

Recent weeks saw demonstrations in Washington, D.C. and New York. In Washington, D.C. over 100,000 Jews demonstrated on behalf of the Land of Israel and the Jewish People. Lower Manhattan became a gathering place where some 50,000 people came to pray on behalf of the Holy Land and the Jewish Nation. In many cities with Jewish populations, people made the effort to attend similar rallies to demonstrate their oneness with the Jews who live in Israel. It was a show of a tremendous outpouring of love—love for the Land, love for its people (the true owners of the Land) and love for the truth. People, ordinary and non-ordinary alike, got up and made an effort to arouse earthlings as well as Heaven, to the serious problems here in Israel. They all understood that each one who participated made a difference. Each one made his own, unique contribution.

What did it take to make that contribution, though? It took more than a year and a half of unabated violence, of unabated killings, of unabated suicide bombers, to finally raise that consciousness to an awareness that something must be done. Here in Israel there was a parallel consciousness-raising, evidenced by an unprecedented turnout of people *volunteering* to rejoin their army reserve units to help in "Operation Defensive Shield."

What does this mean? Not unlike many times in our past (Holocaust, pogroms, blood libels, Inquisitions, etc., *ad nauseam*), we got kicked around. Generally the pattern that followed was: We fled, we rebuilt and, unfortunately, we became complacent. Many times we forgot we were in exile and made ourselves at home. Why bother upsetting the apple cart? However, God doesn't let us forget that we're in exile. Why? When we are in exile, He is too, for God accompanies us wherever we go. Yet, God does not forget. Nor does He need to be reminded. We, on the other hand, do. So we get kicked around a bit.

Oslo was a farce from the beginning. So is the current "War on Terrorism." The "axis of evil" is interesting not for its overly-qualified members (Iran, Iraq, et al), but for those have managed to avoid

"official membership," in particular, Saudi Arabia.

President Bush II considers Saudi Arabia an ally in the war against terrorism. Some may be inclined to be agreed. After all, haven't the Saudi princes recently presented a peace plan for the Middle East? Yet, how is it forgotten that Saudi Arabia has supported Yassir Arafat and his PLO since its creation in 1964? How is it forgotten that Saudi Arabia has supplied Arafat with monies for arms and terror to hijack and blow up airliners (e.g., Swissair, BOAC, TWA and Air France)? How is it forgotten that Saudi Arabia funded PLO attacks on civilian airports in Rome, Vienna and Athens, killing many, many innocent people, as well as many other PLO terrorist attacks?

Maybe someone is thinking, "That's ancient history. What have the Saudis done to us lately?" Well, the Saudi princes and their government have joined hands with a founding member of the "axis of evil," Saddam Hussein, and willingly dole out "death insurance" to the families of suicide bombers at the rate of \$10,000-15,000 per suicide. If that's not supporting terrorism, what is? With allies like this, who needs enemies?! So we suffer, and suffered big, because of them.

We became inured (or is it "numbed") in the process. We became complacent to the murders, shootings, killings, suicide bombers, and they just kept coming. We remained silent. Not completely. After all we did pray, we did mutter words of solidarity. Was it enough? God didn't forget. "In all their suffering, He suffers [along with them]" (*Isaiah* 63:9). Maybe—maybe—it wasn't hurting enough to wake us up, but it hurt God enough to do something about it. So He woke us up with a good *zetz* (whack). The suicide bombings became unbearable. Every day, sometimes twice a day. Pesach night at the Seder, the Haifa mall. Thank God, we began to listen. We began to awake. What's going on? Even the blind, deaf and dumb Israeli government began to get the message. People woke up.

People began to ask, "What's going on?" "What can we do?" Because the great, very important Jewish soul can never be repressed forever. People came out of the woodwork, awoke from their lethargy and awoke to the realization that the Land is ours and that we are an eternal people. They began to flex their voices, their spiritual muscle, to show the world that God hasn't forgotten us and we haven't forgotten Him. Each one of us began to count. We began to realize that complacency has no place, if even one single, very important Jew is not safe from terror, whether in Israel, the USA, France, England, Germany, Australia, South Africa, Argentina or wherever.

The wake up and realization that we've kind of put our Land on a back burner took a while in coming. Till it happened, we managed to put even ourselves on the back burner. But all's well that ends well. It may have taken a mini-holocaust in the Holy Land to awaken us, but, thank God, we can openly see now the resurrection of the beautiful Jewish Soul, waiting in the wings now to return to its source.

If you want to do more, write your President, Congressman or Senator and ask them to see what's going on with their war on terrorism "ally," Saudi Arabia. Ask them to put the leading terrorist on the stand, not the leading victim. If you want to do something substantial, say Psalms or other prayers for our nation and for the Holy Land. Doing so, sends God the message that we know that not only we, but He, too, suffers; and that we want Him, He Who has the Power, to finally do something about it - like bring Mashiach and true peace to the Land. Amen.

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