

DIVREI TORAH BULLETIN

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1882 Days of Captivity for Israeli MIA Gilad Shalit

Here in Yerushalayim I awaken every morning with a happy feeling, that I am privileged to live in the land that HaShem had sworn to our Avot, that it will be given to us. I sense with pride that the Pesukim in our Parsha are alive and speaking to us, today. I specifically refer to (7:12-13) which state, "And it will be when (or because) you listen to these laws....that HaShem will keep with you the Brit (Covenant) ...which He swore to your fathers, and He will bless you and multiply you...in the land which He swore unto your fathers to give you."

But soon I suddenly shudder and think; doesn't G-d see what I see? Certainly we both see the great amount of Torah Shiurim, Torah learning that is taking place in our environment, and the tremendous number of Chesed organizations that exist all over the country. But could I honestly say that we are in this wonderful land "because we listen to the laws of the Torah?" That Chesed, Mishpat and Emet are the rule of the Land? I'm afraid to say that, concerning the vast majority of people in this country, the answer would be a resounding NEGATIVE, and HaShem sees this as well.

But then we read further in our Parsha (9:4-6), and here the Torah states, "It is not because of your righteousness,...that you got to possess this Land; but it was because of the wickedness of these nations that HaShem drove them out before you." Here we see a different slant on our right to the land, it has less to do with our worthiness, and more to do with our neighbors' unworthiness.

Rav Soloveitchik saw in these contradictory Pesukim a two-staged Ge'ulah process. Entering the Land of Israel is the first, and remaining there for good is the second. Our entry into the Land in 1948 came about as a result of the wickedness of all the other nations. The Nazis' and all who associated with them are beyond the term "wickedness," they were "Amaleikim" in every sense, but even our own friend and glorious country, the USA, could have done much more to save thousands of Jewish lives, but alas, they didn't.

So, being here and remaining here are two different things. I begin thinking about Mishkan Shiloh and the community of Shiloh that existed

for 369 years. The country was then not run by the rules of chesed, Tzedaka and Mishpat (see Yirmiyahu Perek 7) and indeed, it was eventually destroyed. Now, my cheerful mood seems to change somewhat. But then I look back at the end of Sefer VaYikra, (26:42), that after the Churban, HaShem guarantees our permanent deliverance with the Havtacha (The Promise) that “Vezacharti et briti Ya’akov, ve’Af et briti Yitzchak, veAf et briti Avraham ezkor, veHa’Aretz ezkor” [I will remember My covenant with Ya’akov, and also My covenant with Yitzchak, and also My covenant with Avraham will I remember, and I will remember the land.]

We can well comprehend the fact that HaShem will refer back to our zechut Avot, Ya’akov, Yitzchak and Avraham, but what is meant by the concluding words of veHa’Aretz ezkor, I will remember the land? Rav Soloveitchik suggested a novel interpretation. If it should happen that the majority of our people will not be following in the path of Ya’akov, which is Torah study and Torah involvement (Ya’akov was the Ish Tam YosheHaOhel), and the majority will not be involved in Avodah, which is Tefillah and the symbol of Yitzchak, then at least they will be involved in the teachings of Avraham Avinu, which was Hach’nasat Or’chim and Gemilut Chasadim.

But alas, if we will be lacking even in those aspects, then HaShem will play the final card of chesed, and He will count into the majority, those Jews that have no Torah learning, their lives are devoid of any Shul or Tefilla association and they have no involvement in Gemelut chasadim but they do have one thing- they live and love Eretz Yizrael. Then, “VeHaAretz Ezkor.” HaShem will add these Jews to our total Knesset Yisrael, and together with them, we shall have the necessary zechutim to warrant our Ge’ula She’leima.

This Havtacha will only come about if WE do our share in Hasbara. Every Jew counts, we dare not give up on any Jewish Neshama. There are only two types of Jews; those who see the beauty in religion right now and those who DO NOT SEE IT YET. On a one-to-one basis each of us can do our share in bringing ONE Jew closer to HaShem. We have our work cut out, and B’ezrat HaShem, we will succeed.

Shabbat Shalom,

Rabbi Aharon Ziegler