

Chaim Goldberg: Bravo, Israel!

Is it finally over? Is it safe to finally blog about?

Every time I sat down to write a finale to this election season in Israel, it never seemed to actually be over. It's been months and months of campaigning, then voting, then coalition building. But now, as of Friday afternoon (Israel time), I think there's finally a deal.

I wanted to write so much about the individual players—about my disappointment in Prime Minister Netanyahu and the political games he's been playing. I wanted to write about newcomers Yair Lapid and Naftali Bennett, who have shown such integrity and conviction; and about the 'ultra-orthodox' politicians who have shown the exact opposite with their hate-filled and anything-but-godly rantings and threats.

Other political observers much smarter than myself have been and will continue to write about that much better than I could.

Instead, I'll just say: "Bravo, Israel!"

Why "bravo?" It's because we really proved to the world that we are a true and genuine democracy. We are not a monarchy, we are not a dictatorship; we are the real deal. The voters had their say. The politicians made their dealings. It wasn't pretty. It was "sausage making" at its most gruesome. But it was real honest-to-goodness democratic governing at its best.

It's so easy to take that for granted, especially for our readers in America or Europe. But it's actually a really big deal.

Look at the people of Syria. They are so desperate just to

have a say in their own destiny. But, they're being slaughtered by the very men who were supposed to lead and protect them.

Look at the people of Egypt, spinning round and round in a tizzy of protests because they so long for something genuine in their leaders. It's something so elusive, but inherently craved by us all.

Look at the people of Iran, on the verge of another election. It's been four years since beautiful Neda lay bleeding to death in the streets of Tehran as she and thousands of others watched the Ayatollah and Ahmadinejad rob them of their votes and their voice.

And on and on, from Venezuela to China to North Korea to Cuba ... people longing for freedom, longing to choose their own fate. But, they find themselves trapped by maniacal men who are obsessed more with their own power, than with the peace and prosperity of their own people.

So, bravo to you, Israel. I'm proud to be a citizen. We have no tanks in the streets, no revolutionary guards going door-to-door. We are imperfect, but we are once again fulfilling our calling as a light to the nations.

I have no doubt that even those who publicly claim to hate the existence of the Jewish nation secretly watch us in awe. They see us casting our ballots in peace and getting the governments we the people demanded.

We must never take this for granted.

"It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, or for rulers to take strong drink, lest they drink and forget what has been decreed and pervert the rights of all the afflicted."(Prov. 31:4-5)

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