



"Back to the Land", Letters from Israel

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Dear Friends:

I do not write here as a reporter who covers the events of the day, nor do I write poetry. I am not a publicist or a scientist; neither am I a poet. I am merely a simple-hearted Jew, who wishes to write to you, my brothers and friends, just as a simple Jew would write a letter to his family, regarding family issues.

That being the case, my greetings from Palestine will be simple; simple will also be my words regarding Eretz Israel. No miracles! No wonders! A country like any other is this land of ours; unpretentious, wrapped in the trivialities of ordinary life, neither more nor less than what occurs in the rest of the world. All the trifles and baseness, common in other regions, are to be found here also; the turmoil, the hustle, the glow of the artificial lights are not lacking here, thank God in Palestine. This only grants the sincere soul with nothing but pain and affliction.

However, if you visit Eretz Israel with your heart entirely open, without prejudices, and with a soul sensitive to the pains of creation, even when they are expressed by ugly grimaces and hoarse voices, then you can be certain that your trust will not be disillusioned, hence this is precisely the advantage that Eretz Israel offers us: that here we are autonomous, with all the vital manifestations of our being, whether or not we are aware of them. All that is ours is for us! Ours are the evils and ours are the remedies; ours is the joyfulness and ours is the misery. Agonies of various kinds can also be found in the countries you live in, no less than those we experience here. Yet, your agonies do not have a meaning or a purpose: they are merely useless inconveniences.

Here in Eretz Israel, the agony, however bitter and depressing it may be, has a purpose and a meaning. No misfortune haunts us to lose itself in a vacuum vainly; no pain strikes without leaving a mark (...).



The reality of these words is particularly evident among the farmers, the men who are engaged in this productive labor, face to face, heart to heart, with the land's nature: this nature that shines with majestic grace, a blunt and transparent nature, completely immersed in its profound prophesy.

People who work naturally, without complications. At times the work is hard, full of pettiness: nevertheless, at times you sense a feeling crossing your soul, as a cosmic exhalation, a celestial clarity. Unfathomable depths stir within you. At times it will seem that you too are putting down roots in the land that you are digging, similarly to the vegetation surrounding you, you are nourished by the solar rays and food falling from the sky; that you too share the life of the tiniest herb, flower and tree, nesting in the depths of nature, emerging from it and rising towards the immensities of the vast world. (...) And in times of distress (...), we have only one consolation: and it is that here – in Israel – we are on solid ground, and are capable of remaining strong.