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Our Views

9th of Cheshvan 5767 (Oct 31, 2006)

Alice in Holyland

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"Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?" asked Alice.

"That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat.

"Where do I really want to go?" Alice asked herself.

"Why don't I know what my goal is? Nobody has told me..."

"Where am I supposed to go?" Alice asked the teacher in school.

"You need an advanced course in computers," the teacher answered. "Excellence and economic success are of utmost importance. That is what is written in the last circular that I received from the Education Ministry.

Alice became a computer expert and made a lot of money as she was taught to do. She bought a jeep with a state of the art GPS but the cat's question remained unanswered.

"Now I can get there easily," Alice said to herself. "But I still don't know where I want to go.... Actually, though, my destination really doesn't matter. The main thing is to keep going, is it not?"

'I don't much care where' -- said Alice.

'Then it doesn't matter which way you go,' said the Cat.

And so Alice continued her journey through Holyland. She couldn't quite decide on a goal because she had simply forgotten who she is. A Jew? A Democrat? An Israeli? And maybe she is simply a citizen of the entire world?

'Let me think: was I the same when I got up this morning?

I almost think I can remember feeling a little different.

But if I'm not the same, the next question is,

Who in the world am I? Ah, THAT'S the great puzzle!

As there was no identity in Holyland, and no path as a result, all that was left was the process of walking. Every path was acceptable. For example, a pale politician was chosen to be President in an effort to cork a political hole. In Holyland, tens of settlements were destroyed just to keep the king out of jail. And the governmental regime was changed to suit the needs of whoever wanted to join the coalition. Actually not. They just said that they would change the method. Alice felt that something was strange. Everything seemed upside down. Instead of the dog wagging his tail, the tail wagged the dog -- and it was not really clear who was the tail and who was the dog.

'Well! I've often seen a cat without a grin,'

thought Alice; 'but a grin without a cat!

It's the most curious thing I ever saw in my life!'

And then a strange war broke out in Holyland. It was like a game that the king started to prove his wisdom and courage. In Holyland, there is no identity or goal, so the army is made of cards. At first, the enemy was very frightened by the card soldiers and their plasma screens. But they soon discovered that if they attack from the side,

the soldiers have no depth. In other words, there is nothing really there.

'Who cares for you?' said Alice, (she had grown to her full size by this time.) 'You're nothing but a pack of cards!'

The cards actually tried very hard to win. They thought that they were real soldiers because surely the king had some sort of goal. So they fought with great courage and many of them were cut into pieces because they didn't understand that they really weren't soldiers and that they were only a pack of cards. Between us -- how can you win when you don't know who you are and the king doesn't have a goal?

When the war got too complicated, the king stopped the game.

'But who has won?'

This question the Dodo could not answer without a great deal of thought, and it sat for a long time with one finger pressed upon its forehead (the position in which you usually see Shakespeare, in the pictures of him), while the rest waited in silence. At last the Dodo said, 'everybody has won, and all must have prizes.'

Despite the impressive victory, the card soldiers began to blame each other. All sorts of aces and former princes appeared one after the other on the news shows and demanded an investigation.

'I couldn't help it,' said Five, in a sulky tone; 'Seven jogged my elbow.'

On which Seven looked up and said, 'That's right, Five!

Always lay the blame on others!'

'You'd better not talk!' said Five. 'I heard the Queen say only yesterday you deserved to be beheaded!'

'What for?' said the one who had spoken first.

'That's none of your business, Two!' said Seven.

'Yes, it is his business!' said Five.'

In the meantime, Alice got hungry. The money that she had made in hi-tech was all spent on Separation Fences and sophisticated Arrow missiles that were supposed to provide the card soldiers -- and all of Holyland -- with depth. Money also had to be spent to compensate the Arab martyrs in the North and Alice was absolutely penniless. She tried to eat a plasma screen, when the Queen of Hearts -- who made her fortune from modern art, social struggles and harassing soldiers at roadblocks -- suddenly appeared.

'I want some bread!' said Alice to the Queen of Hearts.

'There is bread yesterday and tomorrow, but never today,' answered the Queen.

So Alice waited in line in front of one of the soup kitchens. Even the king had once tasted their soup and said that it was very tasty.

'But I don't want to go among mad people,' Alice remarked.

'Oh, you can't help that,' said the Cat: 'we're all mad here.

I'm mad. You're mad.'

'How do you know I'm mad?' said Alice.

'You must be,' said the Cat, 'or you wouldn't have come here.'

(All the quotes are from "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" by Lewis Carroll).

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