



A
Ministry
of:

**CORNERSTONE
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NO PLACE LIKE AMERICA!

Challenge Special - July 2010

By Ben Stein's DREEMZ: I am officially a senior citizen. I don't get Social Security, but I do have Medicare now. It is just a thin little paper card, not even plastic, but it makes me feel old. I don't like it. But as I look back on my 65 years, as all of us old people do, I see how unbelievably blessed I have been. Beyond words, beyond all imagining. I got to spend my life in the United States of America. This country is a true paradise on earth. I often think back to what my ancestors in some miserable shtetl in Russia would think if they saw the way I get to live in America: full legal equality with the majority population, full economic opportunity to do anything my little heart desires and that I am capable of, totally complete freedom of speech. I don't know where my ancestors came from exactly in Russia, although my father once mentioned some town called Bilsk. But my understanding is that they lived extremely modestly, in little ramshackle houses, in terror of the Cossacks and the pogroms. They were probably close to broke all of the time and certainly lacked any kind of luxury I take for granted. Naturally, they could not vote or choose the people who governed them: That was the tsar, whose voice was law and who seemed all powerful but was a puppy dog compared with the murder-machine Bolsheviks who followed the tsars. What would my ancestors from the 15th century, probably one day away from starvation each day, have thought about their descendant living in a home with palm trees and a swimming pool and another with a view of the Pacific Ocean? What would they have thought of me being able to appear on a little lighted box so millions of people could see me at once? What would they have thought of the fact that my father, also their descendant, closely advised presidents of a land they never knew of but that would become the most powerful, most glorious place in the history of man? I even think of my grandfather, my father's father, who came here as a fatherless boy and served for many years as a U.S. Army cavalryman. Not in a plane or on a tank, but on a horse . . . What would he think of the fact that his little boy, my father, who helped out with the bills by delivering newspapers in Detroit and Schenectady, would have the ear of world leaders? What would he, who was unemployed during most of the Great Depression, think of me swimming endlessly in my pool under starry skies as my dogs slumber on the lounges?

I think of the specific luck of Ben Stein to be in America, but I also think of the luck of every American just to be in America. Long ago, I said to my pop, "Dad, we live better than any Jews in history have ever lived." My father, a truly brilliant man, said, "Benjy, the whole point of America is that we all live better than we did anywhere else: the blacks, the Asians, the Irish, the Germans . . . it's better for all of us here than anywhere else." I wonder just how much today's leaders of this great country realize the exceptionalism of this nation. In the Marxist history departments of today's universities, they don't teach that we are exceptional. We are just another racist, money-grubbing country. We are just war mongers and exploiters like everyone else, say these people with their tenure and their hybrid cars. Nonsense, say I. There is only one America where a man like Barack Obama, out of nowhere, with no family background of connections or power, could come to be president. There is no other

