

This Land is My Land

A Breslov Perspective on the Holy Land

Essay #27—Chol HaMoed Sukkot/Parshat V'Zot HaBrakhah 5762

An old Yiddish folk song which focuses upon the sukkah and the Jewish Nation, translates roughly like this:

A rickety sukkah, from scraps of wood, was I able to make into a sukkah, I covered its roof, with a little *skhakh* [the sukkah roof], and sat in my sukkah at night.

A cold wind, blew through the cracks, which threatened to extinguish the candles, But as I made Kiddush, I saw a *chidush* (something amazing), for the candles flickered brightly and shone.

The first stirrings, arrived with my daughter's entrance, bringing in a cold, biting wind, She stood aghast, and said with fear, "Daddy! This sukkah will fall down!"

"Do not be a fool! Do not feel anguish! Don't let the [rickety condition of the] sukkah make you sad. Now it is nearing, two-thousand years — and the sukkah still stands proud and erect."

We have seen the terrible events of September 11 past, shake the pillars of the earth. Calls for unity to spearhead the war on terrorism were declared worldwide. The Israeli Foreign Minister signed yet another peace agreement with the Palestinians which calls for a cessation of hostilities within his "green line" of the Holy Land, but which also allows for continued warfare and terrorism beyond his delineated "green line" against both soldiers and civilians, against men, women and children, etc. The Palestinians have held up to their side of the agreement, placing bombs within Jerusalem a day after the signing. (Either it's within their green line or they're color blind!) Last night Palestinians entered a Jewish settlement on the green line killing two people and wounding several others. As of this writing, murderous gunfire has erupted (initiated by the Palestinians) in Hebron — as Jews from throughout Israel make the sacred pilgrimage to the Tomb of the Patriarchs during the Sukkot Festival — with quite a few Israeli casualties.

All this in the course of just a few days, while we are being updated about the continuing war against terrorism. Either we're missing something, or the "pieces" just don't seem to find the elusive "peace." Which is why we pray each Friday evening in the *Hashkiveinu* blessing (right before the Amidah), "Spread over us Your sukkah of Peace" —any other peace simply won't do the job.

In this week's Torah reading, *V'Zot HaBrakhah*, Moshe speaks of the viability of the Land, the blessings it holds forth for all Jews and the security it represents. "Iron and copper are your borders...your enemies He will chase away...and Israel shall dwell securely, by itself..." (*Deuteronomy* 33:25-28). Moshe prophesied about the time the Jews will dwell undisturbed in their Land for Moshe foresaw **EVERYTHING** that will happen to the Jews until the end of time (Rashi on *Deuteronomy* 34:3). Thus, all the trials and tribulations that the Jews were to endure, including those we are witness to today, are thus spoken about in the Torah. But, so too, are the prophesies of the good days to come. But where are they? All we ever manage to glimpse are the atrocious antics and terror tactics of the ultimate barbarians. It does not matter who the victims are, as long as there are victims. All because the many various

governments and foreign ministers permit additional victims!

Rebbe Nachman explains that sukkah represents Binah, a transcendental type of intellect, which hovers over and protects those "within," i.e., the Jewish Nation (see *Likutey Moharan* I, 266). In our case, it is transcendental, for how can a seemingly rickety building act as protection when in itself it requires support. Yet, we are commanded to build the sukkah as a "temporary dwelling" (*Sukkah* 3a)?! Specifically such a building is our protection. As suggested in the Yiddish folk song, the sukkah, i.e., the tradition of the Jewish nation, has sustained us throughout their exile.

Security does not exist anywhere in the world today. No one knows how, where, etc. the Arabs are planning to victimize others. The attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon came out of nowhere and have sunk into oblivion. Who can venture a suggestion about a next time? We're not dealing with rationality, for how many people do we know of who are willing to kill themselves—with as many others as they can—for absolutely no gain whatsoever, except to shake up everyone's security?

Thus, the lesson of the sukkah is one of faith in God, a lesson of a transcendental intellect — that God does exist though I cannot know this rationally. This is the secret of Jewish endurance. Despite having lived for 2000 years in exile, with our existence in each place as secure as a rickety sukkah, we HAVE endured, and even outlasted each and every one of their tormentors. Thus, we have as much security today as we always have had. Because we have God. We must learn to trust Him. We must always place our trust in Him. We must heighten our awareness of His presence in our lives. We must remain steadfast in our observance of Torah and in keeping with our traditions. For without our traditions, our lives are as shaky as — "as a fiddler on a sukkah's roof."

Remaining steadfast in our observance will allow us to "dwell secure in our Land," as secure as we always have during the past 2000 years of exile. Keeping to our traditions will bring forth God's Divine Providence to protect us even further, until we merit to the verse (*Deuteronomy* 33:28-29), "And Israel shall dwell securely, alone (i.e., without the Palestinians and the others in whom it now seeks refuge) in a Land blessed with crops and fruits...Fortunate are you, Israel, who is like you; a nation whose salvation is from God, Who protects you (as we have seen throughout the exile for we are still here)...your enemies will try to vanquish you, but you will, in the end, be victorious." Speedily, in our days, Amen.

Have a wonderful Sukkot, whatever remains of it. We at Breslov Research wish each and everyone of you, as well as all of Israel and the Jewish Nation, a "piskah tava", a good kvittel from God, on Hoshana Rabbah. May we all merit to a happy, healthy and prosperous year, one which sees the Coming of the Mashiah and the Final Redemption, Amen.

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