

Dear Chavraya,

The sukkah is up and awaiting decoration, laughter, and song. How quickly we move from the intense inwardness of the *Yamim Nora'im* to the physical and sensuous nature of Sukkos. Physical labor, taste and smell, fruits of the harvest, the lulav and esrog waved outward in every direction. Having withdrawn into ourselves on Yom Kippur, into the sanctuary of a day apart, with Sukkos we return to the world of time, returning to the world itself. Spiritually refreshed, our task is now to leave the retreat of yesterday and tend to the needs of the world in the spirit of all that we have prayed for.

Franz Rosenzweig, one of the great Jewish thinkers of the twentieth century, whom I spoke about on Yom Kippur, speaks of Sukkos in his magisterial work, *The Star of Redemption*, as "the way back into time." From the *Yamim Nora'im*, he writes that we now "must leave the hidden togetherness with God and issue forth into the world.... The Feast of Booths is a feast of redemption founded on the base of an unredeemed era and of a people yet within the pale of history.... The Feast of Booths reinstates the reality of time."

An unredeemed world is the world that we know, a world that for all of its beauty is marred by violence and strife. It is a world that has not yet crossed the sea into the Messianic time of ultimate redemption; when swords shall be beaten into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks and all people "shall dwell beneath their vine and fig tree, in peace and unafraid." In the collective recitation on Yom Kippur of sins committed, cruelty, hatred, violence, oppression, we take collective responsibility to remove from the world the barriers that divide people from each other. Through atonement we commit ourselves to action. This is expressed in a fascinating verse in this week's Torah portion, *Parashat Ha'azinu*, at the very end of Moses' song to Israel, *v'chiper admato amo / and God's people will atone for God's earth*. That is our task, of one people joined with all people -- for all shall dwell beneath the vine and fig tree -- atonement through the work of repair.

As we enter Shabbos we shall soon sing in the evening prayers, *ufros aleinu sukkat sh'lomecha / spread over us the sukkah of Your peace*. On Shabbos, we symbolically live the vision of a world at peace, dwelling in a *sukkat shalom* of God's making. As Shabbos ends this week, it is our turn to literally go out and build a *sukkat shalom*. As we initiate the process, committing ourselves to the large task, may all peoples soon come to dwell in a sukkah that is a world at peace.

Shabbat shalom,  
Rabbi Victor