“Brought home by our children’’.

by Jeffrey M Cohen

Gloria and I returned yesterday
from the Israel war zone.
Or, rather, were ‘brought back’ –
if you don’t mind –
like children,
by our own anxious children
with the prompting of *their* children –
All Children of Israel.
We now have a new slant on the *Ur’ei vanim* psalm-verse:
‘*Your children’s children want peace in Israel*’ –
before they’ll let you stay!

Wordsworth wrote that ‘the child is father of the man.’
He could have been writing about all children
who early on become our parents, knowing more about
such things as esoteric social media communication
than we’ll ever know – or wish to know –
and who respond, readily and indulgently,
to our desperate *SOS’s* (‘Save our Sabas!’) pleas
when something technical, like our Apple computer,
goes pear-shape.

And Wordsworth truly knew something about Jews,
having written a poem extolling the beauty of “a Jewish family”.
So, I view his ‘father of the man’ as a reference to my children,
all of whom displayed to *their* children
the depth of their parental love and concern,
by surfing (note my technical vocabulary!) the El Al sites

and holding on, with suppressed exasperation,
for over an hour, on its choked telephone lines,
to bring forward our booking
on three consecutive days, to get us home
on the earliest possible flight.

For, like a child, we would have stayed on
to see out our Succot “holiday/holyday” –
and suffer the emotional, if not the existential,
consequences.

But they, as ‘fathers of the man,’ knew better.
Perhaps, as more recent parents,
Their fear and responsibility
was more acute than ours.
Perhaps, they read the IDF acronym
as “***I***srael ***D***aren't ***F***ail”.
For, if the Arabs lose one war,
they lose citizens.
if Israel loses one war,
it forfeits its land, its people,
its sovereignty and its future,
its identity and its dreams.

“Israel daren’t fail”.
Am Yisrael chai.