



Our heavenly guests, the Sukkos Perspective 2023

The Sukkos Perspective is in honor of the Refuah Shlema of HaRav Amitai Ben Shoshanna. And in loving memory of Reuven Ben Yaakov, Leah Mintche Bas Yaakov Yosef, Edward Ben Efraim, Shlomo Ben Edward, and Yirachmiel Daniel Ben Gedalia.

We are about to celebrate Sukkos, the holiday of immense joy and happiness. The central theme of the holiday can be found in the davening, "**Zman Simchaseinu- the time of our happiness.**" This happiness is due to the miraculous Clouds of Glory that protected the Jewish nation during the forty years in the desert.

We observe the Chag by eating, drinking, and spending as much time as possible in the Sukkah. We also bind together the Arba minim (four types of fruit), an **Esrog** (citron), a **Lulav** (palm branch), three **Hadassim** (myrtle twigs), and two **Arovos** (willow twigs). Each day except Shabbos, we make a brocha over them and shake them in each direction.

One of the unique traditions of Sukkos is our heavenly guests, known as the Ushpizin. According to the Zohar, (Emor 103a) each night of Sukkos has an intense concentration of spiritual energy relating to a great leader from our history. **Avraham, Yitzchak, Ya'akov, Moshe, Aaron, Yosef and Dovid Hamelch.**

The Zohar writes that each night of Sukkos, the soul of the corresponding heavenly guest actually leaves Gan Eden to partake in the Divine Light of our

physical Sukkah. Many have the custom of reciting a special prayer at each meal, inviting and welcoming the Ushpizin to their Sukkah.

Additionally, Chassidus explains that all Chabad Rebbes, including the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid of Mezerich, join us on Sukkos with the other Ushpizin. Each night, both Ushpizin enter the Sukkah to partake in the celebration and impart their holiness upon us.

However, a question comes to mind: What is the connection between the Ushpizin and the holiday of Sukkos? Each Seder night, we actually invite those who need food to eat and those who want to partake in a Seder to join. Yet we don't have the Ushpizin during Pesach when we invite people to our Seder. Why are there Ushpizin on Sukkos and not any other holidays?!

The Talmud in Sukkos (27b) writes a profound statement: מלמד שכל ישראל אחת - **"All Jews are fit to sit in one Sukkah."** No matter how connected or affiliated they are, we can be in the same Sukkah. The Rabbis learn this from a Pasuk in Vayikra (23:42) יִשְׁבוּ בִּישְׂרָאֵל כָּל־הָאֶזְרָח בְּשִׁבְעַת יָמִים כָּל־הָאֶזְרָח בִּישְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁבוּ בַסֻּכּוֹת - *"You shall live in Sukkah for seven days, all Jewish people shall sit in Sukkahs."*

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks writes in his book *Covenant and Conversation* about the uniqueness of Sukkos. He explains that Sukkos is the most inclusive holiday; we pray for the world's rainfall and add seventy extra sacrifices during Sukkos to represent the seventy nations of the world.

But what's even more unique, writes Rabbi Sacks, is the unity that Sukkos brings to the Jewish people. Whether through the binding of the Lulav and Esrog or just being together in the Sukkah, happiness and unity are at the core of our celebration.

Accordingly, the heavenly guests, our forefathers and leaders join us each night to celebrate this unity. They transcend time and space to unite us with our beginnings, with the entirety of the Jewish nation so we may all sit in one Sukkah.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rav Menachem Mendel Schneerson, writes that the Sukkah represents G-d grabbing hold of the Jewish nation with passion and affection. The walls of the Sukkah symbolize His Heavenly arms hugging us with kindness and compassion.

When we enter the Sukkah with unity and joy, accompanied by our heavenly guest, we fulfill the mitzvah of leaving the limitations of the past behind and jumping into the embrace of G-d. As the Torah writes (Vayikra 23:44) למען ידעו דרתיכם כי בסכות הושבתי את-בני ישראל בהוציא אותם מארץ מצרים אני ה' אלקיכם - *"So that future generations will know that I made the Jewish people live in Suktos when I brought them out of Egypt, I am the Lord, your G-d."*

May we merit to celebrate this Suktos in the physical embrace of G-d with the ultimate redemption!

Have a joyous and meaningful Suktos!

Rabbi Sholom Yemini