

After Yom Kippur, which ends in joy and gratitude, we move rapidly into the increased joy and gratitude of Sukkot. Along with *chag ha-asif* (Festival of Ingathering) another name for Sukkot is *z'man simchateinu* (Season of Our Rejoicing). Indeed, Sukkot is our only festival carrying the explicit commandment to rejoice, which we do in deep gratitude for the bounty we have harvested, remembering that famine is unfortunately still a reality in many parts of the world. The booths we build and inhabit (weather permitting in northern climes) for this special week remind us of the fragility of life and the basic need for shelter from the elements. Tragically, far too many people still lack the basic necessities of life. From Abraham, the quintessential host, through the commandments to provide for the less fortunate, hospitality is one of the basic principles of Judaism. The *magid* section of our Pesach seder opens with the Aramaic invitation, "Anyone who is hungry should come and eat, anyone who is in need should come and partake of the Pesach sacrifice." Maimonides teaches that "One who locks the gates of his courtyard and eats and drinks with his children and his wife, without feeding the poor and the embittered, is [not indulging in] rejoicing associated with a mitzvah, but rather, the rejoicing of his gut." (Mishneh Torah 6:18) Having guests for Shabbat and holidays is the Jewish thing to do, and during Sukkot we invite guests into our sukkah. Along with our physical guests we also invite *ushpizin* (Aramaic for guests), supernal guests, to join us in the Sukkah. *Ushpizin* first appear in the *Zohar*, the foundational book of Jewish mysticism, but the practice of inviting them into our sukkah began in the 16th century with Rabbi Isaac Luria, who paired each guest with one of the seven lower *sephirot*. Those of us who count the Omer know that each week and each day of each week corresponds to one of these *sephirot*. There are many variations on the seven *ushpizin*, but typically they are Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Joseph, and David. Some now also include women, and the list of invitees varies. This is a traditional list, with their *sephirot*, which usually describe character traits of the respective invitees:

Day 1: Chesed (loving kindness, humaneness)	Abraham and Sarah
Day 2: Gevurah (discipline, restraint, judgement)	Isaac and Miriam (or Rebecca)
Day 3: Tiferet (beauty, balance, harmony, honesty)	Jacob and Dvorah (or Leah)
Day 4: Netzach (victory, endurance, eternity)	Moses and Hannah (or Joseph and Rachel)
Day 5: Hod (many-faceted splendor, humility)	Aaron and Avigail (or Moses and Miriam)
Day 6: Yesod (foundation, procreation, righteousness)	Joseph and Huldah (or Aaron and Devorah)
Day 7: Malchut/Shechinah (kingdom, connection to us)	King David and Queen Esther (or Ruth)

Siddur Lev Shalem (Rabbinical Assembly, 2016) offers the variation in parentheses above, along with the formula repeated each evening: "I ask of you ... heavenly guests, that you join me and that you bring with you all the other heavenly guests ..." Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi z'l has a slightly different lineup. Abraham with Ruth, Isaac with Sarah, Jacob with Rebecca, Moses with Miriam, Aaron with Devorah, Joseph with Tamar, David with Rachel. His invitation also includes the others each day. It is noteworthy that each of the *ushpizin* suffered exile. Abraham willingly left his home for a land HaShem promised to show him. Both he and Isaac fled famine, Abraham going to Egypt and Isaac to Avimelech, king of the Philistines in Gerar. Jacob fled to his uncle in Aram. Joseph was sold as a slave to Egypt. Moses fled to Midian, and he and Aaron led the Israelites during their 40-year trek through the wilderness. And David fled into the Judean desert. Throughout great adversity, all of them steadfastly trusted in HaShem's protection. The *ushpizin* were equally dedicated and each dared to speak out, and even to assume leadership in a male dominated world. In some traditions people place extra chairs in their sukkah for these supernal guests, much as we pour a cup of wine for Elijah in the second half of our Pesach seder. I recently learned that the Jews who lived there called the Polish town Oświęcim (later known by its infamous name Auschwitz) Oshpitzin, because "This village was famous for its hospitality. Every Avrum, Yitz, and Yankev seemed to know that if you were detained at the border while passports or merchandise awaited approval, you could find a good shul, a good bed, and a good meal here, as if you were as special as the ushpizin's Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" (Jewish Telegraphic Agency - New York Jewish Week: "Before Auschwitz was Auschwitz") The town's Yiskor book contains a legend that long before the war, the dead from the nearby fields would arise and daven in a favorite Oshpitzin shul. One Simchat Torah, after midnight, the shul filled with light, the doors were flung open, and invisible voices were heard singing and dancing. The living who dared to enter, and the dead were called up by name to the Torah reading. (<https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/oswiecim1/oswiecim.html>) This legend may be fanciful, but the Jewish name of the town and its reputation for hospitality are factual. What amazing irony! I believe that one of the main reasons we continue to survive against all odds is that we have always assumed responsibility for ourselves and for others. For us Jews, hospitality is not just a social nicety; it is the lifeline that has ensured our existence. Today, we extend this outward by working to advance justice and equality not just for ourselves, but for the whole world.