



INTRODUCTION TO *Our Ushpizin*

“*Ushpizin*,” Aramaic for “guests,” refers to the seven holy “guests” who visit our *sukkot* over the seven days of the *chag*. Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Moshe, Aharon, Yosef and David are the spiritual “founding fathers” of the Jewish people, each of whom served G-d in their own unique way. Avraham served the Almighty through *chesed*, with love and kindness, while Yitzchak served G-d with *gevurah*, the path of self-restraint; and so on.

Although we turn to these extraordinary “guests” for inspiration all year long, we view them through a unique lens during Sukkot, the *chag* of Jewish unity. On Sukkot, we yearn for all of Israel to dwell together in one *sukkah*; and on Sukkot, we bind all four kinds of Jews together as one.

Like the Jewish people of our own time, the seven *Ushpizin* were radically different in background, temperament and disposition. Yet each of these holy people became a critical foundational pillar of *Am Yisrael*, without whom we would not have become the holy nation we are today. Each of the *Ushpizin* were exceptional individuals, but only *together* are they complete.

The seven essays in this *Ushpizin* series were written by seven unique individuals serving the Jewish community all over the world. Men and women, Ashkenazi and Sephardi, young and ‘experienced’; like the *Ushpizin* themselves, they bring a diverse array of perspective and insight. Unified by their dedication to the people, Torah and Land of Israel, together they represent the incredible breadth of the worldwide Mizrachi movement.

As we sit together with friends and family in the *sukkah*, we remember that though we may differ from one another in background, personality traits and opinion, we are nevertheless united as one nation in service of Hashem. *Chag Sameach!*