“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 chessed, 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!