

JEW'S with VIEWS

We asked five accomplished Jews from around the world to weigh in on which Jew throughout history they would most like to invite to their sukkah for a cup of coffee.



Rabbi Reuven Boshnack

Who would I have in my *sukkah*? That's a great question. I'd love to have the Neot Deshe, Rabbi Shmuel Dov Asher Leiner, the son of the Mei Hashiloach, with whom I spend hours each week while preparing, writing and teaching his Torah.

Or Rabbi Yeshaya Shapira, brother of the Aish Kodesh, who compiled Rav Kook's teachings on the Land of Israel, blending my love of the Land of Israel with the world of *chassidut*.

Closer to home, I'd like to invite my grandparents, but especially Grandma Toby. Sukkot was her Yom Tov. She'd spend hours in the *sukkah*, just breathing its unique air, talking to Hashem, and inviting everyone, from friends and acquaintances to judges, teachers and police officers, into the *sukkah*.

Most of all, I'd also like to be there with my family. I'd like to be there, to be fully present in the *sukkah*, not thinking about anywhere else or anyone who isn't there with me but to be there with the people who are there. To give attention and presence to the people who matter the most. **כָּל הָאֶזְרָח בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל יָשׁוּבוּ בְּסֻכּוֹת.** "all of Israel will dwell in the *sukkah*." If I can be there in the *sukkah*, everyone will be there with me too!

Rabbi Reuven Boshnack is the co-director of OU-JLIC at Brooklyn College with his wife for the last 13 years. He received his semicha from RIETS, and holds a Masters in Education and a Masters in Mental Health Counseling. A talmid of Rabbi Moshe Weinberger, he has taught Chassidut, Jewish thought and Jewish Law for the last 20 years in Brooklyn and Boca Raton. Rabbi Boshnack has written three books on Jewish thought, on the writings of the Sfat Emet, the Izhbitzer and the Maharal.



Orlee Gutman

Devorah, the biblical judge and prophetess, had a unique ability to inspire people to help their peers and their country. She recognized that in order to ensure a safe and secure Israel, everyone had to share responsibility in both the spiritual and practical realms.

Recognizing that the generation lacked Torah knowledge and values, Devorah was instrumental in educating the masses and encouraging others to take part in this task. She also recognized that practical steps had to be taken to safeguard Israel's security and was a motivating force behind military action and encouraging *shvatim* (tribes) to take responsibility for Israel's defense.

Devorah did all this while publicly acknowledging Hashem's hand in Israel's success.

I would love the opportunity to ask Devorah advice on her approach to inspiring a nation, creating a national *kiddush Hashem*, getting different groups to work together, and encouraging responsibility and creativity in individuals and as a whole.

Orlee Guttman is Director of Strategic Partnerships at The Jerusalem College of Technology (JCT)-Lev Academic Center, an engineering, business and health sciences college that offers men and women the opportunity to study Torah while pursuing high-level academic degrees, with nearly 5,000 students coming from Orthodox and Haredi communities from Israel and around the world. Orlee is a co-founder of the LevTech Entrepreneurship Center at JCT and directs JCT's Cyber Elite Training Program for Outstanding Graduates of Computer Science and Software Engineering. Orlee made Aliyah from Montreal, Canada in 2015.



Rabbi Daniel Alter

My interest in my family's Galicianer roots has grown as I've gotten older, especially as my older children have begun to express interest in the intense spirituality of the *chassidic* world.

Dr. Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, in his famous work, *Zachor*, describes the importance of memory in the Torah. Memory, as distinct from history, incorporates practices that bring the past into the present. What better place to incorporate the various generations of my family than in my *sukkah*?

One of my visitors would be Reb Leibish Nussbaum, a *Rosh Hakahal* in Dzhikov in 1757, where the Nussbaum family lived for generations. Family legend tells the story of *De goldene feyndl*, a golden flag bestowed to the Nussbaum family by the feudal baroness after the Jews were saved from a blood libel and she recognized the injustice of her mistake. This came to an abrupt end with the Holocaust, closing a rich history in which Poland had been a Jewish sanctuary for almost a millennium.

There are so many questions I would ask him. What is the background to this legendary story? What was Sukkot like in Dzhikov? What was religious life like? Were interactions with non-Jews in the area positive? Did our family have any unique customs? While I have read books about this time, hearing directly from an ancestor would bring that era to life and allow me to integrate my past into my present.

Rabbi Daniel Alter is the Head of School of the Moriah School in Englewood, New Jersey. He was formerly the founding Rabbi of the DAT Minyan in Denver, Colorado, and the Head of School of Denver Academy of Torah. He lives in Bergenfield, New Jersey with his wife and seven children.



Deborah Isaac

Golda Meir, of course! The holiday season is a time of reflection, when we consider how the year ahead might differ from the year behind us. For me, this year will surely be quite different from the last as I begin my first term as President of the American Zionist Movement.

I am most grateful to be among those born after the establishment of the State of Israel. We owe a great debt to those who sacrificed so much so that we can have a country that will welcome and protect us – no matter where we reside or which citizenship we hold. Regardless of our political or religious views, we must be thankful for the State of Israel.

Among those who made this possible is none other than the indefatigable Golda Meir, an American woman who made Aliyah as an adult and who became the first – and so far only – woman to hold the premiership in Israel. Though not a strictly observant Jew, she had a strong Jewish identity. She said that being Jewish "...is not only a matter, I believe, of religious observance and practice. To me, being Jewish means and has always meant being proud to be part of a people that has maintained its distinct identity for more than 2,000 years, with all the pain and torment that has been inflicted upon it."

What would Golda say about the Israel of today? I would love to know!

Deborah Isaac was elected President of The American Zionist Movement on June 22, 2021. She has been a delegate of the Orthodox Israel Coalition slate to several World Zionist Congresses and is a member of the Presidium of the Vaad Hapoel/Zionist General Council of the World Zionist Organization on behalf of Mizrahi. Deborah served as President of AMIT from 2011–2015.



Rabbi Shlomo Katz

My natural reaction is to think of who was the sweetest and most inspiring human being that could teach me everything I need to know about *shalom* and *achdut*.

Right away, Rav Kook comes to mind. However, if I sat down and I discussed this question with Rav Kook, I think he would tell me: "It's not me that you need to invite into your *sukkah*. You need to invite someone you feel that in some very mysterious way Hashem has chosen to represent *Am Yisrael*."

And so I would invite Prime Minister Naftali Bennett to my *sukkah* to sing together and to learn the Torah of Rav Kook about taking the *arba'a minim* and binding them together. I would ask the Prime Minister what it's like to try to bring the Jewish people together. I would read the verse from Megillat Esther (4:14) over and over again: "And who knows if you have come to royalty precisely for this moment!" Who knows why people show up in moments of leadership...

I would also ask Naftali Bennett to stay in the *sukkah* alone and do *hitbodedut* and cry his eyes out over *Am Yisrael*, because a leader who can't cry for his people can't lead them either. I believe that if someone would just show the Prime Minister a little bit of *P'nimiyut HaTorah*, a little bit of what is beneath the surface, a tremendous opportunity for *Am Yisrael* could come in ways we could have never imagined.

Rabbi Shlomo Katz was born in New Jersey and grew up in Los Angeles and Ra'anana. He has released a number of albums and has been blessed to sing some of his melodies throughout the world. Rabbi Katz is the spiritual leader of Beit Knesset Shirat David in Efrat, where he gets to pray and learn with some of his best friends. He is also the founder of The Shlomo Katz Project.