

Guests in the Sukkah

Sukkot is a time to practice hospitality, the mitzvah of *hakhnasat orhim*. Not only do we ask friends and neighbors to join us in the sukkah, we also have the custom of inviting seven revered ancestors on all seven nights of Sukkot and honoring one of them especially on each of the seven nights. These guests are called **אוֹשְׁפִיזִין** *ushpizin*, an Aramaic word derived from the same Latin word as the English "hospice."

Traditionally, the seven *ushpizin* are all men. The Conservative prayer book *Siddur Sim Shalom for Shabbat and Festivals* pairs the men with women: Abraham & Sarah, Isaac & Rebecca, Jacob & Leah, Joseph & Rachel, Moses & Miriam, Aaron & Deborah, David & Ruth. Consider buying a copy of the siddur for use at home; it is available at Jewish bookstores or from www.uscj.org. Also feel free to invite the *Ushpizin* in your own words.

Extending the Tradition

- Which biblical character would you most like to invite to your sukkah?
- Why?
- Is there a Jewish figure from another period of history whom you would like to invite? What would you say about your special spiritual guest to introduce him or her to your family and friends?

If you want to know more, check out these or other books about the holidays.
"Sukkot" in *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1971).
Philip Goodman, *The Sukkot and Simhat Torah Anthology* (Philadelphia: JPS, 1973)
Richard Siegel, Michael Strassfeld, and Sharon Strassfeld, *The First Jewish Catalog* (Philadelphia: JPS, 1973)
Paul Steinberg, *Celebrating the Jewish Year: The Fall Holidays* (Philadelphia: JPS, 2007)



בַּסֻּכּוֹת תֵּשְׁבוּ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים

You shall live in booths
for seven days.

[Vayikra (Leviticus) 23:42]

A decorative border at the top of the prayer card featuring grapevines with clusters of grapes and apples. The border is flanked by vertical lines with a grid pattern.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
וְצִוָּנוּ לֵישֵׁב בַּסֻּכָּה.

*Barukh attah Adonai, Eloheinu melek ha-olam
asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav, v'tzivanu
lei-sheiv ba-sukkah.*

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the
Universe, who has sanctified us with His com-
mandments and commanded us to live in the
sukkah.

וּלְקַחְתֶּם לָכֶם בַּיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן פְּרֵי עֵץ הָדָר
 כַּפֹּת תְּמָרִים וְעֵנָף עֵץ-עֵבֶת וְעַרְבֵי-נָחַל
 וּשְׂמַחְתֶּם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם שִׁבְעַת יָמִים:

On the first day you shall take the fruit of *hadar* trees, branches of palm trees, boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before *Adonai* your God seven days.
 [Vayikra (Leviticus) 23:40]

- "Fruit of *hadar* trees" refers to the *etrog* (citron).
- "Branches of palm trees" refers to the *lulav*.
- "Branches of leafy trees" refers to the *hadassim* (myrtle).
- "Willows of the brook" refers to the *aravot* or *hoshanot*.

The Four Species -- *arba'at ha-minim* -- are called by the inclusive term *lulav*, since the *lulav* is the largest and most prominent. Even though the *brakhah* (blessing) has the words "waving the *lulav*," it actually refers to all four species taken together.

Taking Hold of the Lulav

Stand facing east. Hold the *lulav* in your right hand with its solid spine facing you. The two willow branches with their long, mouth-shaped leaves should be to the left of the *lulav*; the three myrtle branches with their oval, eye-shaped leaves should be to the right. The myrtle branches should extend to a greater height than the willows. Hold the heart-like *etrog* in your left hand, with its stem end up and its *pittam* (top point) down. Put your hands together, so that the *lulav* cluster and the *etrog* are touching each other.

Some people say that the Four Species taken together represent parts of our bodies with which we may serve God: our spine, our mouths, our eyes, and our hearts.

||| Taste represents learning. Smell represents good deeds. The *etrog* has
 ||| both taste and smell. The *lulav* has taste but not fragrance. The myrtle
 ||| has smell but no taste. And the willow has neither. Each represents a
 ||| different kind of person. Some people have learning and do good
 ||| deeds; some people have one but not the other; and some have
 ||| neither. A real community is one where all types of people are bound
 ||| together like the Four Species.

Saying the Blessings with the Lulav

Face East. Hold the *lulav* in your right hand and the *etrog* in your left hand, with its stem end up and its *pittam* (top point) down. Keep your hands together, so the *lulav* and *etrog* are touching, and say:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
 אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת לֻלָב.

Barukh attah Adonai, eloheinu melekh ha-olam, asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav, v'tzivanu al n'tilat lulav.

Blessed are You, *Adonai* our God, Ruler of the Universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us concerning the waving of the *lulav*.

The first day that you wave the *lulav*, add:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
 שְׁהַחֲיֵנוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהַגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמְן הַזֶּה.

Barukh attah Adonai, eloheinu melekh ha-olam, sheh-heh-heh-yanu, v'kiyemanu, v'higiyanu la-z'man ha-zeh.

Blessed are You, *Adonai* our God, Ruler of the Universe, who has granted us life and sustenance, and permitted us to reach this season.

Waving the Lulav

After you have said the *brakhot* (blessings), turn the *etrog* over, so its stem end is down, and its *pittam* is pointing up. Now shake!

Use a motion of reaching out and reaching in, straightening your arms away from you, and then bending your elbows and bringing your hands toward you. Shake the *lulav* 3 times in each direction:

- ★ East (in front of you)
- ★ South (out to your right)
- ★ West (over your shoulder pointed in back of you)
- ★ North (out to the left)
- ★ Toward Heaven (lift your arms up)
- ★ Toward Earth (move your arms down, but keep holding the *lulav* right-side up, not pointing down)

This brochure contains God's name. Please save it or bring it to a synagogue or religious school that collects sacred texts for respectful disposal.