**Rabbinic Thoughts on Sukkot**

 One of the most fascinating aspects of this holiday is the “*Ushpizin*” – Aramaic for “guests”. As you know, we focus on having our meals during the holiday (weather permitting) in the Sukkah. It’s a great Mitzvah to invite guests to join us at theses meals. Unfortunately, because of Covid, we will not be able to do this during the holiday.

 However, the *Ushpizin* is not affected by the Pandemic. That’s because it is mystical and spiritual in nature. The Kabbalists instituted this custom, which is to invite special “guests” into our Sukkah, in addition to our guests of flesh and blood. Who are these special people? None other than many of our great ancestors, one on each of the seven days of Sukkot. They are (in order): Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Joseph, and King David.

 What a wonderful way to connect with our history! In addition, we are instructed to learn and speak about each of these “guests”, and to learn the moral characteristics that have made them such an integral part of Jewish Tradition. Much like the *Tu Bi’shevat* Seder (another Kabbalistic innovation), we can make this experience an opportunity for learning and growth.

 So, this year, even if you can’t invite friends to your Sukkah for meals, have the *Ushpizin* at your table. You’ll be glad you did!

Chag Sameach!

Rabbi Moshe Saks