

Toward A More Meaningful Ushpizin

On Sukkot, we commemorate Israel's dwelling in the desert in sukkahs with G-d's protection. There is a custom to welcome the seven Ushpizin (spiritual guests) into our Sukkah. These great Biblical leaders each match up with a kabbalistic middah/sefirah (attribute/concept). I believe that we do not literally welcome these great guests into our Sukkahs, but that each one and his respective sefirah match up with a specific way in which G-d influenced us and helped us to develop into a nation in the desert. By welcoming in one of these great Shepherds, we recall one type of way that G-d positively impacted us.

Below is a list of the concepts that match up with events in Israel's trek through the desert, with the Hebrew prayers that one says on each night of Sukkot at the very bottom. You can print out this page and use it on sukkot to say the Ushpizin Prayer and share words of Torah that will, hopefully, spark fruitful conversation.



Avraham & Chesed: This famous word does not solely mean kindness, it means 'to sustain life and promote life's existence'. It relates to how G-d sustained us in the desert through different means: the manna, a mobile water well, clouds of protection against enemies, and more. Those who elucidate kabbalah have portrayed this middah as the growth stage of a rose bush's cyclical development.

Yitzchak & Gevurah: Gevurah is a middah that is related to judgment (*din*). It works as a mechanism to zero in on negative components and weed them out. As such, this idea parallels, among other things, the phenomenon that when people do despicable deeds, they receive negative consequences. This can be conceptualized as a rose bush being trimmed. If one does not trim a rose bush, it will die from having too much growth to support and too much dead matter still imbedded in the plant. Israel, as we read about the nation in the Torah, has many incidences when it, or, more accurately, parts of it do despicable deeds. These specific perpetrators are weeded out to preserve the healthy parts of Israel. As difficult as it is to hear about, it is necessary for the healthy survival of the nation.



In addition, Israel needs physical borders and boundaries to survive. Any group of persons that joins together inevitably makes rules to maintain their connectedness. This may sound quite paradoxical, as groups often form to engage in pure recreation (*chesed*), as with social clubs, or to commit crimes (*anti-gevurah*), as with gangs. However, there is no escaping the need for rules to maintain the essential connectedness of an organization - however oxymoronic that sounds. All lasting groups have rules.

Ya'akov & Tiferet: This sefirah relates the most to Sukkot, for several reasons. First of all, we have a tradition that the holiday of sukkot corresponds to the forefather Ya'akov (Tur), who is related to the middah of *tiferet*. Also, the Sukkah is one of the most symbolic mitzvah items that we have. It *represents* the fact that we lived in huts in the desert, that G-d protected us there, a stroll in the Garden of Eden and more. *Tiferet* is understood to be a blending of *chesed* and *gevurah*, a klall that comes forth from a prat, a broad concept that is connected, by way of metaphor or allusion, to a particular item or image. For example, a painting may portray, through one isolated image or scene, an entire era in history or struggle that a person may feel.

In the desert, G-d commanded Israel to use religious items of representational significance, and the concept that we must find deep meaning (*chesed*) within our commandments and customs, but that we can never abrogate the technical requirement to do the law (*gevurah/din*). Actions that are based on items that have symbolic meaning are

called rituals by psychologists, and are extremely important to the ongoing connectedness and health of a family or organization.

Moshe & Netzach: Israel was given morals, values, and religious commandments to live by, in the desert. These relate to the middah *netzach*, which means eternal - as in eternal values - and relates to morals. As these concepts relate to Moshe and his contribution and facilitation of these important components, he is identified with this middah. These morals were given through the authority of the Torah, with certain laws being given before or after the theophany at Mt Sinai by Israel's leaders, but the authority still stemming from G-d's decision that the Torah and Moshe's words that relate to it are the root of binding law. This middah also teaches that education is important and that people need to study, teach others and develop their intellect.



Interestingly, most groups that humans form end up agreeing on adding a higher purpose to their union. A seemingly recreational men's club feels it important to donate and raise money for a particular charitable cause. I find it quite fascinating that Hells Angels motorcycle clubs, understood to be an Outlaw Motorcycle Gang by the National Gang Threat Assessment and the Bureau of Justice Assistance, officially “**have runs to raise money for local charities**” (taken from their official website-red coloring their own) and that each local chapter has a commitment to charitable benevolence.

Aharon & Hod: *Hod*, as personified by Aharon, teaches us that each individual has importance, even within a large group. The individual's achievement is not competition, but the glory of one person's accomplishment, which, in reality, is good for the group. There were many individuals who contributed to Israel in the desert, such as Pinchas, Yehoshua, the daughters of Tzlofchad, and Calev. These people used their free will to contribute to Israel's success, but we must know G-d's facilitation of these achievements, as well.

As a related concept, *hod* brings us the importance of interpersonal harmony and the importance of caring for others. This caring, as demonstrated by Aharon, the *hod* archetype, is rooted in our emotion of empathy, and reminds us that we need to take into consideration others' feelings. We must assist others with their emotional health and support and empathize with them, as Aharon does in the midrash. The clouds that G-d uses to protect Israel in the desert relate not only to *chesed* but to this sefirah, as well. This is due to the fact that the clouds took preventative measures to ensure that Israel would be safe, have an easy trek, and that their clothing was in order. Many commandments that Israel receives at Sinai are related to the interpersonal realm. If we do these actions we will mirror Aharon, G-d through the command of imitating Him, *imitatio dei*, and quite clearly help our fellow man.

Yosef & Yesod: Yosef's contribution in his life and to Israel is the middah of *yesod*, which involves connecting disparate components together. Israel, as a nation, must be organized and have its parts interconnected. The whole Book of Bamidbar reflects the national middah of *yesod* developing from non-existent to fully connected and organized. Israel can be understood to have been more susceptible to the troublesome incidences that occurred in the desert (Korach, the spies, Bilam) due to the fact that it had breakdowns in its *yesod* sefirah order in Bamidbar. It was not fully organized and led with *yesod*-type assertiveness, and certain perpetrators took advantage of that.



David & Malchut: Once Israel is organized and its parts are working from the *yesod* middah, it becomes a systematic anthill-like group that needs little direction to function. Things appear to happen automatically. The direction it needs is given by its king, who totally commits to serving the people and is the sole executor of their will.

Though Moshe and Yehoshua are understood by many midrashim and commentaries to have the status of king and function as such, this sefirah is not fully achieved in its purest form in the desert.

That having been said, many kabbalistic sources label the Book of Devarim “The Book of Malchut”, in that parts of the book prepare Israel for war and map out the physical boundaries of the future settling in the Land of Israel, among other reasons. Unfortunately, many more years pass until Israel is led by David, and the lack of full connectedness and synergy is palpable in the books of Joshua, Judges, and much of Samuel. We do not live in a perfect world, nor have we ever; it is up to us to do what we can: to do tikkun (significant, profound improvement) to improve ourselves, families and communities and hope that this compounds and ripples forth, with Divine Assistance, to push Israel and the world in the right direction.

Ultimately, *malchut* teaches us that we must recognize that G-d is the true king, with complete dominion over all, which is an important message during this season. May we see, speedily in our days, proper *malchut* with all components of Israel functioning properly together.

Ushpizin Prayer in Hebrew with Vowels-The Underlined Lines are the Essential Ones



תִּיבוּ אוֹשְׁפִיזִין עֵילָאִין, תִּיבוּ תִיבוּ אוֹשְׁפִיזִין קְדִישִׁין, תִּיבוּ תִיבוּ אוֹשְׁפִיזִין דְּמַהִימְנוּתָא, וְזָפָא חוּלְקִיהוֹן דְּיִשְׂרָאֵל דְּכָתִיב כִּי חֵלֶק יְדוּד עִמּוֹ יַעֲקֹב חֶבֶל נִחְלָתוֹ: יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יְדוּד אֱלֹהֵי וְאֱלֹהֵי אָבוֹתַי שְׁתַּשְׁרָה שְׁכִינְתְּךָ בֵּינֵינוּ וְתַפְרוֹס עָלֵינוּ סֶכֶת שְׁלוֹמְךָ בְּזִכּוֹת מִצְוֹת סֶכָה שְׁאַנְחָנוּ מְקַיְמִין לִיחְדָּא שְׁמָא דְקוּדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא וְשְׁכִינְתָּה בְּדַחִילוֹ וּרְחִימוּ לִיחְדָּא שֵׁם י"ה בּו"ה בְּיַחְדָּא שְׁלִים בְּשֵׁם כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְלִהְקִיף אוֹתָם מִזִּי כְּבוֹדְךָ הַקְּדוֹשׁ וְהַטְּהוֹר נְטוּי עַל רַאשֵׁיהֶם מְלַמְעָלָה כְּנֶשֶׁר יַעִיר קֶנוּ, וּמִשָּׁם יוֹשְׁפֵעַ שְׁפַע הַחַיִּים לְעַבְדְּךָ (פב"פ אָמְתָךְ). וּבְזִכּוֹת צִאתִי מִבֵּיתִי הַחוּצָה וְדָרְךָ מִצְוֹתֶיךָ אַרוּצָה יִחְשֹׁב לִי זֹאת כְּאֵלוֹ הַרְחַקְתִּי נְדוּד, וְהִרְבַּ כְּבִסְנֵי מַעוֹנֵי וּמַחְשָׁאֵי טְהָרֵנִי, וּמְאוֹשְׁפִיזִין עֵילָאִין אוֹשְׁפִיזִין דְּמַהִימְנוּתָא תְּהִיֵּינָה אֲזִינִיךָ קְשׁוּבוֹת רַב בְּרִכּוֹת, וְלִרְעֵבִים גַּם צְמֵאִים תֵּן לַחֲמֵם וּמִימֵם הַנְּאֻמִּים, וְתַתֵּן לִי זְכוּת לְשֹׁבֵת וְלַחֲסוֹת בְּסִתְרָךְ צֶל כְּנֹפֶךָ בְּעַת פְּטִירְתִּי מִן הָעוֹלָם, וְלַחֲסוֹת מִזֶּרֶם וּמִמְטֵר, כִּי תִמְטִיר עַל רְשָׁעִים פָּחִים, וְתִהְיֶה חֲשׁוּבָה מִצְוֹת סֶכָה זוֹ שְׁאֵנִי מְקַיֵּם כְּאֵלוֹ קִימְתִּיהָ בְּכָל פְּרֻטִיָּה וְדְקִדּוּקִיָּה וְתִנְאַיָּה וְכָל מִצְוֹת הַתְּלוּיִם בָּהּ. וְתִיטִיב לָנוּ הַחֲתִימָה, וְתוֹכְנֵנוּ לִישֵׁב יָמִים רַבִּים עַל הָאָדָמָה אֲדָמַת קֹדֶשׁ בְּעַבְדוּתְךָ וּבִידְאָתְךָ. בְּרוּךְ יְדוּד לְעוֹלָם אָמֵן וְאָמֵן

Each night (preferably before you eat) say the following phrase before each guest:

אָזְמִין לְסַעֲוֹדְתִי אוֹשְׁפִיזִין עֵילָאִין אַבְרָהָם יִצְחָק יַעֲקֹב מִשָּׁה אַהֲרֹן יוֹסֵף וְדוּד:

then..

On the first day בְּיוֹם הָרֵאשׁוֹן אֹמֵר

בְּמַטְמוּ מִינְךָ אַבְרָהָם אוֹשְׁפִיזִי עֵילָאִי דִּיתְבִּי עִמִּי וְעִמְךָ כָּל אוֹשְׁפִיזֵי עֵילָאִי יִצְחָק יַעֲקֹב מִשָּׁה אַהֲרֹן יוֹסֵף וְדוּד:

On the second day בְּיוֹם הַשֵּׁנִי אֹמֵר

בְּמַטְמוּ מִינְךָ יִצְחָק אוֹשְׁפִיזֵי עֵילָאִי דִּיתְבִּי עִמִּי וְעִמְךָ כָּל אוֹשְׁפִיזֵי עֵילָאִי אַבְרָהָם יַעֲקֹב מִשָּׁה אַהֲרֹן יוֹסֵף וְדוּד:

On the third day: ביום השלישי אומר

בַּמָּטוּ מִיִּנְךָ יַעֲקֹב אוֹשְׁפִיזִי עֵילָאֵי דִיתְבִי עֵמִי וְעַמְךָ כֹּל אוֹשְׁפִיזִי עֵילָאֵי אַבְרָהָם יִצְחָק מֹשֶׁה אַהֲרֹן יוֹסֵף וְדוֹד

On the fourth day: ביום הרביעי אומר

בַּמָּטוּ מִיִּנְךָ מֹשֶׁה אוֹשְׁפִיזִי עֵילָאֵי דִיתְבִי עֵמִי וְעַמְךָ כֹּל אוֹשְׁפִיזִי עֵילָאֵי אַבְרָהָם יִצְחָק יַעֲקֹב אַהֲרֹן יוֹסֵף וְדוֹד

On the fifth day: ביום החמישי אומר

בַּמָּטוּ מִיִּנְךָ אַהֲרֹן אוֹשְׁפִיזִי עֵילָאֵי דִיתְבִי עֵמִי וְעַמְךָ כֹּל אוֹשְׁפִיזִי עֵילָאֵי אַבְרָהָם יִצְחָק יַעֲקֹב מֹשֶׁה יוֹסֵף וְדוֹד

On the sixth day: ביום הששי אומר

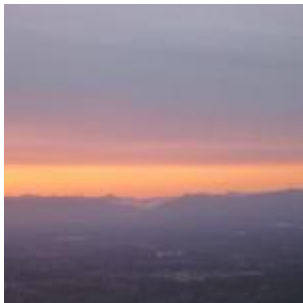
בַּמָּטוּ מִיִּנְךָ יוֹסֵף אוֹשְׁפִיזִי עֵילָאֵי דִיתְבִי עֵמִי וְעַמְךָ כֹּל אוֹשְׁפִיזִי עֵילָאֵי אַבְרָהָם יִצְחָק יַעֲקֹב מֹשֶׁה אַהֲרֹן וְדוֹד

On the seventh day: ביום השביעי אומר

בַּמָּטוּ מִיִּנְךָ דוֹד אוֹשְׁפִיזִי עֵילָאֵי דִיתְבִי עֵמִי וְעַמְךָ כֹּל אוֹשְׁפִיזִי עֵילָאֵי אַבְרָהָם יִצְחָק יַעֲקֹב מֹשֶׁה אַהֲרֹן וְיוֹסֵף

Prayer for when you leave the Sukkah: תפלה כשיוצאין מן הסוכה

יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יְדוֹד אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ כְּשֵׁם שְׁקִימְתִי וְיִשְׁבְּתִי בְּסוּכָה זוּ כֵּן אֲזַכֶּה לְשֹׁנֵה הַבָּאָה לִישֵׁב
בְּסוּכָה שָׁל לַיִתָּן



בספר יסוד יוסף כתב להתפלל אז תפלה זו

רְבוּנָא דְעֵלְמָא. יְהֵא רַעְוָא מִן קַדְמָךְ. שְׁאוּתָן מַלְאָכִים הַקְדוּשִׁים הַשְׂיָכִים לְמִצּוֹת
סָפָה. וְלְמִצּוֹת ד' מִיָּנִים לֹלֵב וְאַתְרוּג הַדָּס וְעֵרְבָה. הַנוֹהֲגִים בְּחַג הַסּוּכּוֹת הֵם יִתְלוּ
עִמָּנוּ בְּצִאֲתָנוּ מִן הַסָּפָה. וְיִכְנָסוּ עִמָּנוּ לְבִתְיָנוּ לְחַיִּים וְלְשָׁלוֹם. וְלִהְיוֹת תָּמִיד עִלְיָנוּ
שְׁמִירָה עֲלִיוְנָה מִמַּעוֹן קְדוֹשְׁךָ. וְלִהְצִילָנוּ מִכָּל חַטָּא וְעוֹן וּמִכָּל פְּגָעִים רָעִים. וּמִכָּל
שְׁעוֹת רָעוֹת הַמִּתְרַגְּשׁוֹת לְבֵא לְעוֹלָם. וְתַעֲרָה עֲלֵינוּ רוּחַ מִפְּרוּם. וְחַדַּשׁ כְּלִיּוֹתָנוּ
לְעַבְדְּךָ בְּאַמֶּת בְּאַהֲבָה וּבִירָאָה. וְנִתְמַיֵּד מְאֹד בְּתַלְמוּד תּוֹרָתְךָ הַקְדוּשָׁה לְלַמּוּד וּלְלַמֵּד. וְזָכוּת אַרְבַּעָה מִיָּנִים
וּמִצּוֹת סָפָה יַעֲמוּד שְׁמֵאֲרִיךְ אַפְּךָ עַד שׁוּבֵינוּ אֵלֶיךָ בְּתַשׁוּבָה שְׁלִימָה לְפָנֶיךָ. וְנִתְקַן כָּל אֲשֶׁר פָּגַמְנוּ. וְנִזְכָּה
לְשָׁנֵי שְׁלַחְנוֹת בְּלִי צַעַר וְיָגוֹן אֲנִי וּבְנֵי בֵיתִי וְיוֹצְאֵי חֻלְצֵי. וְנִהְיֶה כְּלָנוּ שְׁקִימִים וְשָׁלוּם דְשָׁנִים וְרַעְנָנִים. וְעוֹבְדֵי
הַשֵּׁם בְּאַמֶּת לְאַמְתּוֹ כְּרְצוֹנְךָ הַטוֹב בְּכָלֵל כָּל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

יְהִיו לְרְצוֹן אִמְרֵי פִי וְהִגִּיוֹן לְבִי לְפָנֶיךָ יְהוָה צוּרִי וְגוֹאֲלִי