

Ushpizin: Prayers/Poems For Sukkot In Time of Covid-19

1. Invitation to the Builders / The Virtual *Sukkah*

You are invited, please do come in,
Honored Guests, builders of this virtual sukkah.

You are invited,
Builders of our past sukkot
In the backyard, the park, the roof:
Every year
You put up the walls
You hung the decorations.
Where are you this week?

You are invited,
Builders of our Torah and Midrash
In the shul, in the ark,
In the books and the scrolls:
For thousands of years
You told the stories,
True even if not true.
We need good stories.

Builders of Halakha and Talmud
In the home, on the street, in the Beit Midrash:
All those many do's and don'ts and disputes.
This year we have too many challenges.
This year we are all questions.
All of us, trying to make sense
Of the unexplained and incongruous.
Can you make meaning of this year?

You are invited,
Builders of Jewish culture,
All the creatives
Currently forced to sit on your hands.
Please, find a way to reach us.
We wish it was safe to sing.

Builders of ideas and rational thought,
Science and philosophy, change and experimentation

In universities and conferences and back
rooms across the world,
Ask the questions, do the math, challenge us.
Don't be nice, make us listen.

You are invited,
Builders of unions and parties and social
justice,
Of agitation and resistance,
In the streets and online,
Join us in the voting booth,
This year's most important sukkah.
Builders of pandemic rituals and services,
Clergy and prayer leaders,
Inventing Judaism in 2020.
Help us save ourselves,
And save yourselves, too, please.
Have a sip or two of wine, say a blessing.
Rest for a second. You okay?

And
Builders of necessary services,
Food and sanitation and transportation,
Caregivers and medical workers,
On zoom and online and on our doorstep.
You are all essential workers
Essential to our souls and our bodies
And we pray for your health and well-being.
We pray you are paid a living fair wage,
We cannot survive without you.
How can we serve you?

You are each invited,
You are the creators of all our virtual sukkot.
Please do come in, Honored Guests.
Sit. Eat. Have you shaken the lulav yet today?
Stay safe,
Amen

Trisha Arlin