

Sukkot Miracle in the Sky

When God Dwelt with His People at 34,000 Feet

Flydubai Flight FZ1073 • September 30, 2026 • Dubai to Tel Aviv

On the fourth day of Sukkot 5787, 174 souls aboard a Dubai-to-Tel Aviv flight experienced what many have called a living demonstration of the Feast's deepest promise: God dwells with His people and protects them.

"You shall dwell in booths for seven days... that your generations may know that I made the people of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt."

— Leviticus 23:42–43

The Feast of Tabernacles & the Promise of Presence

Sukkot (the Feast of Tabernacles, or Booths) is the joyful festival in which the people of Israel leave the security of solid walls and dwell in fragile temporary shelters. The command is deliberate: to remember that true safety never rested in bricks or military might, but in the God who "tabernacled" among them in the wilderness.

The feast looks backward to the cloud and fire that guided Israel, and forward to the ultimate promise echoed in Revelation 21:3: "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people." The heart of Sukkot is the longing—and the assurance—that the Holy One desires to dwell with His people.

What Happened on Flydubai Flight FZ1073

On Wednesday morning, 30 September 2026—during Chol HaMoed Sukkot—Flydubai Flight FZ1073 departed Dubai International for Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion Airport. Aboard were 174 people, the vast majority Israeli citizens returning home for the festival.

Approximately two hours into the flight, while cruising over northern Saudi Arabia, the co-pilot (an Omani national) stabbed the captain, Indian pilot Smit Machchhar, and deliberately forced the Boeing 737 into a steep dive. In less than two minutes the aircraft plunged between 14,000 and 17,000 feet, exceeding structural limits, reaching near-supersonic speeds, and suffering the loss of a large portion of its rudder.

What followed has been described by passengers, Israeli leaders, and rabbis as a chain of miracles:

- The wounded captain's final act. Despite severe injuries and lying on the cockpit floor, Captain Machchhar managed to unlock the door—using what witnesses called "the last moments of his energy."
- Passengers' courage. Israeli passengers forced their way into the cockpit, overpowered the attacker, and helped stabilize the aircraft.
- Off-duty pilots on board. Two additional Flydubai pilots traveling as passengers entered the cockpit, regained control, and flew the damaged aircraft to safety.
- Medical help present. An Israeli dentist among the passengers immediately treated the wounded captain.
- Structural survival. Despite extreme G-forces, dive angles, and the loss of rudder surface, the aircraft remained controllable and landed safely.

The plane made an emergency landing in Tabuk, Saudi Arabia. All 174 souls survived. Later that evening a replacement aircraft brought the passengers home to Ben Gurion Airport, where they were greeted with songs of thanksgiving and the declaration Am Yisrael Chai—"the people of Israel live."

"I just can say that it was a miracle. It was awful, crazy, and we thank God that we survived it... We are back home. And we are happy to see everyone here."

— Passenger Lital Shachaf

A Living Testimony During Sukkot

The timing is impossible to ignore. While the Jewish people around the world were dwelling in fragile booths—remembering that their true dwelling place is under the protection of the Almighty—174 of their brothers and sisters experienced that protection in the most literal and dramatic way possible: inside a metal tube that should have become a tomb, yet instead became a sukkah at 34,000 feet.

Israel's Chief Rabbi Kalman Ber, speaking the next day inside a sukkah, declared: "You have to be blind not to see the miracles... Throughout the holiday of Sukkot, the Holy One, blessed be He, has shown us the meaning of 'His right hand embraces me.'" Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu described the rescue as "a chain of miracles with divine assistance."

Not for Israel Alone — An Open Invitation to the Nations

The miracle on Flight FZ1073 was a powerful testimony of God's faithful care for the people of Israel. Yet the same Lord of the Feast who protected those passengers does not limit His presence, protection, or invitation to one nation alone. From the very beginning, the Feast of Tabernacles carried a universal horizon.

The prophet Zechariah foresaw a day when the nations would stream to Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Tabernacles: "Then everyone who survives of all the nations that have come against Jerusalem shall go up year after year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Booths" (Zechariah 14:16). The God who "tabernacled" with Israel in the wilderness is the same God who desires to dwell with all who call upon His name.

In the New Testament this promise finds its fullest expression. The apostle John writes that "the Word became flesh and dwelt [literally, 'tabernacled'] among us" (John 1:14). Jesus, the true Tabernacle, is the Lord of the Feast—and through Him the invitation is extended to Jew and Gentile alike. The same protective presence that intervened at 34,000 feet is available to every person who turns to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob through the Messiah He has sent.

Gentiles are not second-class guests at this table. Scripture declares: "There is neither Jew nor Greek... for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). And again: "For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him" (Romans 10:12). The miracle of Sukkot 5787 is therefore not a closed story. It is a living signpost pointing every nation, every people, and every individual to the same faithful God who still dwells with those who trust Him.

"Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be with them."

— Revelation 21:3

"And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

— Joel 2:32 / Romans 10:13

The fragile aircraft became, for a moment, a sukkah in the sky.
The same Lord of the Feast who protected His people that day
still invites Jew and Gentile alike to dwell under His covering.

May this testimony strengthen faith, inspire gratitude, and call every heart—Jewish and Gentile—to the God of Israel who still watches over all who trust in Him.

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