



## *The untouched waters, the Sukkos Perspective 2022*

*The Sukkos Perspective The Yom Kippur Perspective is in honor of the Refuah Shlema of HaRav Amitai Ben Shoshanna and Ruchma Leah Bas Sarah.*

*The Yom Kippur Perspective is in loving memory of Reuven Ben Yaakov, Leah Mintche Bas Yaakov Yosef, Edward Ben Efraim, Shlomo Ben Edward, and Yirachmiel Daniel Ben Gedalia.*

We are celebrating the holiday of Sukkos, a celebration of immense joy and happiness. The main theme of the holiday can be found in the davening as we repeat the phrase, **“Zman Simchaseinu- the time of our happiness.”** This directly connects to our heritage as it commemorates the joy of the miraculous Clouds of Glory that protected and nourished the Jewish people in the desert.

We observe the Chag by eating, drinking, and spending as much time as possible in the Sukkah. We also bind together the Arba minim (*four types of fruit*), an Esrog (*citron*), a Lulav (*palm branch*), three Hadassim (*myrtle twigs*), and two Arovos (*willow twigs*). On each day except Shabbos, we make a brocha over them and shake them in each direction.

Each night of Sukkos, we celebrate the Nisuch Hamayim - the water libation/pouring with the celebration of Simchas Beis Hashoeva (singing and dancing in the streets). In the middle of every night during Sukkos, the Kohanim would draw water from a well-spring in the city of Dovid.

As the Kohanim completed the ceremonial water drawing, **people would erupt in joyous singing and dancing**, lasting back to the Beis Hamikdash.

The Mishnah in Sukkos (5:1) writes that someone who did not see this celebration has not seen real joy in their life. The Talmud in Sukkos (51b) recounts that the greatest sages would juggle flaming torches and sing praises to G-d; this was the celebration of Simchas Beis Hashoeva.

However, a question comes to mind: Why was the simple act of drawing water followed by such a great celebration? Furthermore, there is no commandment in the Torah to do the Nisuch Hamayim or to commemorate it. So why is it practiced so fervently today?

The Talmud in Taanis (2b) explains that Nisuch Hamayim is hinted at in the Torah when it discusses the sacrifices and libations for Sukkos. In Parshas Pinchas (Bamidbar 29:19,29,33), Moshe details the various communal offerings and sacrifices for Pesach, Shavous, Sukkos, Rosh Hashanah, and Yom Kippur. Most sacrifices were accompanied by a flour and oil mixture and a wine libation/pouring.

But there is an extra letter in the Pasukim about the Sukkos offerings (29:19,29,33) spelling out Mayim - water. Our Rabbis learn from here that there is a special libation/pouring of water on Sukkos.

In the times of the Beis Hamikdash, a group of people only believed in the Written Torah and rejected the Oral Torah altogether. They argued that it should not be done since Nisuch Hamayim is not clearly written in the Torah.

They maintained that unless it is said explicitly, they should do a wine libation/pouring like every other sacrifice. To counteract their opinion, the rabbis instituted that Nisuch Hamayim should be done with great fanfare and celebration.

However, the Lubavitcher Rebbe takes Nisuch Hamayim a step further. He explains that there is a significant difference between wine and water libations.

The wine libation represents our interference with nature because we turn grapes into wine. For example, a person who is sad or depressed can drink wine and become artificially happy and joyful. Therefore, wine libation represents a limited and restricted way of connecting to G-d.

However, the water libation represents an uninterrupted, constant, and perpetual connection to our Creator. Since the water the Kohen would pour was from a well-spring that came from the depth of the earth untouched and unblemished. The water was pure and clean since it was in the same condition that G-d created it, representing an undiluted connection to G-d.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe explains that Nisuch Hamayim is specifically done on Sukkos because it follows Yom Kippur. Since during Yom Kippur, an undiluted level of G-d is shining and radiating on the world. Although we have sinned against Him, G-d, in His great mercy, forgives us and erases our sins.

Therefore, we immediately celebrate the holiday of Sukkos with the Nisuch Hamayim. Since the Sukkah represents G-d grabbing hold of the Jewish nation with passion and affection. The walls of the Sukkah symbolize His Heavenly arms hugging us with kindness and compassion.

When we enter a Sukkah, we enter the embrace of G-d and a vessel of pure and undiluted love from G-d. This is precisely what the Nisuch Hamayim represents, a connection to our Creator unblemished for the physicality of this world.

***May we merit to celebrate this Sukkos in the physical embrace of G-d with the ultimate redemption!***

*Have a joyous and meaningful Sukkos!*

*Rabbi Sholom Yemini*