



A Wonderful Insight from the Gra of Vilna

The Third Beis HaMikdash Corresponding to Yaakov Avinu Will Be Built on Succos

In honor of the upcoming, auspicious Chag HaSuccos, we will focus on one of the unique festivities of this holiday—**Simchas Beis HaShoeivah**. In the Mishnah, our sages of blessed memory describe it as follows (Succah 51a): **“מי שלא ראה: ולא היתה חצר בירושלים שאינה שמחת בית השואבה לא ראה שמחה מימיו... ולא היתה חצר בירושלים שאינה מאירה מאור בית השואבה... חסידים ואנשי מעשה היו מרקדין בפניהם באבוקות.”** **Whoever did not see the Simchas Beis HaShoeivah** (Celebration of the Place of Water-Drawing) **never saw rejoicing in his life . . . There was not a courtyard in Yerushalayim that was not illuminated by the light of the** (celebration of the) **Beit HaShoeivah . . . Chassidim and men of good deeds would dance before them with flaming torches in their hands and utter before them words of songs and praises.**

In the Gemara, we learn (ibid. 53a): **“תניא אמר רבי יהושע בן כהנא, כשהיינו שמחים שמחת בית השואבה לא ראינו שינה בעינינו, כיצד, שעה ראשונה תמיד של שחר, משם לתפלה, משם לקרבן מוסף, משם לתפלת המוסף, משם לבית המדרש, משם לאכילה ושתייה, משם לתפלת המנחה, משם לתמיד.”** **It was taught in a Baraisa: Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananya said: When we celebrated the Simchas Beis HaShoeivah, our eyes saw no sleep. How so? During the first hour was the morning “tamid”; next was the morning tefilah; next was the korban “mussaf”; next were the “mussaf” prayers; next we went to the Beis HaMidrash; from there we went to eat and drink; from there to the “minchah” tefilah; next was the afternoon “tamid”; thereafter was the Simchas Beis HaShoeivah.**

This spectacle celebrated the drawing of the water for water libations to be poured on the mizbeiach. Throughout the year, a wine libation accompanied every korban. On the

seven days of Chag HaSuccos, a water libation was brought with the morning “tamid,” in addition to the wine libation. This was performed with great pomp and circumstance, in keeping with the passuk (Yeshayah 12, 3): **“ושאבתם מים בששון”—and you shall draw water while rejoicing from the wellsprings of salvation.**

The fact that the sages and prominent leaders of Yisrael celebrated this event in such spectacular fashion teaches us that the water libation on Chag HaSuccos was a very lofty matter. The Talmud Yerushalmi (Succah 5, 1) explains that they were not merely drawing water, but they were drawing “ruach hakodesh”—divine inspiration:

“אמר רבי יהושע בן לוי למה נקרא שמה בית שואבה, שמשם שואבים רוח הקודש—Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: Why is it called “Beis Shoeivah”? Because from there they drew “ruach hakodesh.” They also taught (ibid.): **“יונה בן אמיטי מעולי רגלים”—Yonah ben Amitai was among those who went up for the festival; he came to the Beis HaShoeivah festivity, and he was imbued with “ruach hakodesh.”** This teaches you that “ruach hakodesh” only rests on a happy heart. What is the reason? (Melachim II 3, 15): **“It was when the musical instrument played, God’s spirit was on him.”**

A Consolation to the Lower Waters for Their Grief

Now, Chazal teach us that the water libation on the mizbeiach on Chag HaSuccos was a consolation to the lower waters, who wept at the time of creation, because they were

separated from the upper waters and located farther away from Hashem. As it is written (Bereishis 1, 6): **וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹקִים: יְהִי רָקִיעַ בְּתוֹךְ הַמַּיִם וְיִהְיֶה מַבְדִּיל בֵּין מַיִם לַמַּיִם, וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹקִים אֶת הַרְקִיעַ וַיַּבְדֵּל בֵּין הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר מִתַּחַת לַרָקִיעַ וּבֵין הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר מֵעַל לַרָקִיעַ וַיְהִי כֵן.** **“G-d said, ‘Let there be a firmament between the waters, and let it separate between water and water.’ G-d made the firmament, and He separated between the waters which were beneath the firmament and the waters which were above the firmament. And it was so.”**

We learn that the lower waters were consoled from the following passuk (Vayikra 2, 13): **וְכָל קָרְבַּן מִנְחָתְךָ בַּמֶּלַח תִּמְלַח וְלֹא: וְעַל כָּל קָרְבַּן תִּקְרִיב מֶלַח—every korban minchah of yours shall be salted with salt; you may not discontinue the salt of your G-d’s covenant from upon your minchah offering—on all of your korbanos shall you offer salt.** Rashi comments: **For a covenant has been made with salt since the six days of creation; for the lower waters were promised to be offered on the mizbeiach in the form of salt and during the water libations on the festival (Succos).**

Rashi’s source is the Midrash presented by Rabeinu Bachaye in parshas Vayikra (ibid.): **And this is what they said in the Midrash: The lower waters are referred to as “weeping waters.” Why are they called “weeping waters”? Because when HKB”H split the waters, He placed these above and these below. The lower waters began to weep . . . They lamented the fact that they did not merit remaining above in close proximity to the Creator. In an attempt to appease them, HKB”H told them that since you acted out of respect for Me, the upper waters are not permitted to utter their song until they first obtain permission from you . . . and furthermore you (the lower waters) are destined to be offered on the mizbeiach as salt and water libations—affording you distinction and honor.**

Clearly, the lower waters’ lament—**“we wish to be in the presence of the King”**—deserves further clarification. If HKB”H created them and intended that they should remain down below on earth, who were they to complain and question His decision? Should He have altered the order of creation to appease them? Furthermore, it is one of the principles of our faith, as expressed by the song of the heavenly seraphim

(Yeshayah 6, 3): **“קָדוֹשׁ קָדוֹשׁ קָדוֹשׁ ה’ צְבָאוֹת מְלֹא כָל הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ”**—**holy, holy, holy is Hashem, Master of Legions; the whole world is filled with His glory.** He is everywhere; so, even down in this world, the lower waters are in the presence of the glory of the King. So, what were they crying about? Lastly, why did HKB”H choose to appease the lower waters with libations poured on the mizbeiach specifically on Chag HaSuccos?

The Chiddush of the Gra

We will begin to shed some light on the subject by introducing a precious insight found in the sacred teachings of the illustrious Gaon of Vilna , zy”a (who passed away on Succos on the 19th of Tishrei). In his compilation Even Sheleimah (11, 1), he writes: **Four stages of the geulah will transpire at the four times at which the world is judged: On Pesach, they will be redeemed from servitude; on Rosh HaShanah will be the final judgment of the enemies of Hashem; on Atzeres will be the ingathering of the exiles by Moshe Rabeinu, a”h; and on Succos will be the building of the (third) Beit HaMikdash.**

It appears that we can provide an excellent source for the assertion that the third Beis HaMikdash will be built on Chag HaSuccos from what the Tur (O.C. 417) presents in the name of his brother, Rav Yehudah. He writes that the Shalosh Regalim align with the three holy Avos: **Pesach corresponds to Avraham, as it is written (Bereishis 18, 6): He instructed Sarah, “Knead and make cakes.” Shavuot corresponds to Yitzchak; for the the shofar blown at Matan Torah was from Yitzchak’s ram. Succos corresponds to Yaakov, as it is written (ibid. 33, 17): “Then Yaakov journeyed to Succos and built himself a house; and for his livestock he made succos (shelters).”**

Furthermore, it is evident from the Gemara (Pesachim 88a) that the third Beis HaMikdash will be built in the merit of Yaakov Avinu: **‘מֵאִי דְכֵתִיב וְהָלְכוּ עַמִּים רַבִּים וְאָמְרוּ, לָכוּ וְנַעֲלָה אֶל הָרִ ה’ אֶל בֵּית אֱלֹקֵי יַעֲקֹב וְגו’, אֱלֹקֵי יַעֲקֹב וְלֹא אֱלֹקֵי אַבְרָהָם וַיִּצְחָק? אֲלָא לֹא כְאֲבָרָהֶם שִׁכְתוּב בּוֹ הָרִ, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר אֲשֶׁר יֵאֵמַר הַיּוֹם בְּהָרִ ה’ יֵרָאֵה, וְלֹא כִּי־צִחָק שִׁכְתוּב בּוֹ שְׂדֵה, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וַיֵּצֵא יִצְחָק לִשׁוֹךְ בִּשְׂדֵה, אֲלָא כִּי־עָקֵב שִׁקְרָאוּ בֵּית, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וַיִּקְרָא אֶת שְׁם הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא בֵּית אֵל.”** **What is the meaning of the passuk (Yeshayah 2, 3): “Many nations will go and say, ‘Come, let us go up to the Mountain of Hashem, to the House (בית)**

of the G-d of Yaakov, etc.”? Why specifically the G-d of Yaakov and not the G-d of Avraham and Yitzchak? Not like Avraham, who called it a “mountain” (Bereishis 22, 14) . . . And not like Yitzchak, who called it a “field” (ibid. 24, 63) . . . Rather, it is like Yaakov, who called it (ibid. 28, 19) a “house” (בית).

The Alshich (Vayikra 26, 13) explains that the first Beis HaMikdash stood in the merit of Avraham Avinu; consequently, it was destroyed by our enemies, since Yishmael was fathered by Avraham. The second Beis HaMikdash stood in the merit of Yitzchak Avinu; consequently, it was destroyed by our enemies, since Eisav was fathered by Yitzchak. The third Beis HaMikdash, however, will stand in the merit of Yaakov Avinu, “whose bed was perfect”—meaning that all of his children were tzaddikim. Consequently, it will endure uninterrupted forevermore.

This illuminates for us the assertion of the Gra that the third Beis HaMikdash will be built on Chag HaSuccos. For, we have three “kedushos”—sanctities—related to Yaakov Avinu converging on this festival. First, we have the kedushah of Yaakov Avinu, depicted as the elite of the Avos, since all of his children were tzaddikim, and they are the foundation of the House of Yisrael. Second, we have the kedushah of Chag HaSuccos, which aligns with Yaakov Avinu. Third, we have the kedushah of the third Beis HaMikdash, which is also in the merit of Yaakov Avinu. We express this fact in Birkas HaMazon on Succos by reciting: הרחמן הוא יקים לנו את סוכת דוד “הנופלת”—the Merciful One! May He erect for us David’s fallen succah.

The Succah Embodies the Kedushah of the Beis HaMikdash

We can now add a marvelous tidbit. Our sacred sefarim suggest that the succah contains a semblance of the kedushah of the Beis HaMikdash. In fact, the Siach Sarfei Kodesh (Succos 5) explains in the name of the Avnei Nezer, ztz"l, the reason that we do not find any other mitzvah that involves decoration and beautification like the mitzvah of succah. Here is a pertinent passage from the Gemara (Shabbas 22a):

“סככה להלכתה, ועיטרה בקרמים ובסדינין המצויירין, ותלה בה אגוזים, אפרסקין, שקדים, ורמונים, ופרכילי ענבים, ועטרות של שבילים, יונות,

שמיים וסלתות, אסור להסתפק מהן עד מוצאי יום טוב האחרון של חג.
With regard to one who roofed the succah in accordance with its halakhic requirements, and decorated it with colorful curtains and sheets, and hung in it ornamental nuts, peaches, almonds, and pomegranates, and grape branches, and wreaths of stalks of grain, wines, oils, and vessels full of flour, it is prohibited to use them until the conclusion of the last day of the Festival.

This is seemingly difficult, since they expounded (ibid. 133b) on the passuk in Shiras HaYam (Shemos 15, 2): **זה אלי ואנוהו, התנאה לפניו במצוות, עשה לפניו סוכה נאה, ולולב נאה, ושופר נאה**. **“This is my God and I will glorify Him”**: Beautify yourself before Him in mitzvos. **Make before Him a beautiful succah, a beautiful lulav, a beautiful shofar, beautiful tzitzit, a beautiful sefer Torah . . .** So, why did the sages emphasize to go above and beyond—**“hidur mitzvah”**—with regards to the mitzvos of Chag HaSuccos even though this requirement applies to some degree to other mitzvos, as well?

He provides an answer based on the rendering of Targum Onkelos. The Targum interprets “זה אלי ואנוהו” as the declaration: **“I will build You a Mikdash!”** This interpretation is based on the relationship between the term “ואנוהו” and the term “נוה”, which means a dwelling-place. Thus, we have two elucidations of the passuk: 1) (“זה אלי ואנוהו”) to glorify Him by performing the mitzvos in a beautiful fashion and (2) to build Him a Beis HaMikdash.

Furthermore, we are taught in the Gemara that the succah possesses a semblance of the kedushah of the Beis HaMikdash (Succah 9a): “כשם שחל שם שמים על החגיגה, כך חל שם שמים על הסוכה; שנאמר חג הסוכות שבעת ימים לה’, מה חג לה’ אף סוכה לה’.” **Just as the name of Heaven takes effect upon the korban “chagigah,” so too, the name of Heaven takes effect upon the succah, as it is stated (Vayikra 23, 34): “Chag HaSuccos is seven days for Hashem”—just as the “chagigah” is consecrated to Hashem, so too, the succah is consecrated to Hashem.** Thus, both the elucidation of the Gemara and the elucidation of Targum Onkelos apply to the succah; we beautify the succah with lots of festive decorations, and it is a semblance of the Beis HaMikdash.

This coincides very nicely with the teaching of the Gra of Vilna that HKB”H is destined to build the third Beis HaMikdash on Chag HaSuccos. This suggests that when we fulfill this mitzvah by sitting in the shade of the succah—described as the “shade of emunah”—we are performing a significant preparation and symbolic gesture for the future geulah—when we will be privileged to bathe in the shade of HKB”H.

Mashiach Will Not Come until All the Neshamos Reveal Their Portions of the Torah to the World

Let us now focus on the incessant weeping of the lower waters because they yearn to be closer to Hashem, and their elation on Chag HaSuccos when they are poured on the mizbeiach as libations. We will refer to a wonderful chiddush gleaned from the writings of the great Rabbi Shlomo Kluger, ztz”l, in the responsa Tuv Ta’am V’Da’at. He asserts that the future geulah hinges on the revelation of all the chiddushim of those who have learned Torah throughout all the generations.

In this light, he interprets the message of Shlomo HaMelech, the wisest of all men (Koheles 12, 12): “ויותר מהמה בני הזהר עשות ספרים הרבה אין קץ”—**beyond these, my son, beware: The making of many books is without limit.** In other words, we must continue to publish sefarim of Torah-related chiddushim to hasten the arrival of the future geulah which depends on them.

This can be substantiated based on a teaching in the Gemara (Niddah 13b): “אין בן דוד בא עד שיכלו כל הנשמות שבגוף”—**the son of David will not come until all the neshamos have been removed from the “guf.”** Rashi explains that “guf” is the name of a place (a chamber in Heaven) designated for the neshamos that are destined to be born into this world. Those spirits that Hashem has made that are yet unborn are delaying the geulah. Now, it is well-known that every Jew has his own portion in the Torah. We express this fact in our davening on Shabbas: “קדשנו במצוותיך ותן חלקנו בתורתך”—**sanctify us with Your mitzvos and give us our portion in Your Torah.** Here is what the Shela hakadosh writes on this subject (Korach 1):

Know that the number of Bnei Yisrael was 600,000. The kabbalists explain that they are 600,000 neshamos emanating from the 600,000 letters of the Torah. The

spirituality of the Torah is the neshamos of Yisrael. The generation that received the Torah numbered 600,000. Afterwards, the generations that followed them were all branches from them.

The Megaleh Amukos (186) adds a wonderful allusion: The name י”ש ש”שים ר”בוא א”ותיות ל”תורה—is an acronym for **there are 600,000 letters in the Torah.** This teaches us that every Jew is associated with a letter of the Torah. As stated, every Jew possesses his own unique portion and place in the Torah.

We can now combine these two ideas. Chazal said: **The son of David will not come until all the neshamos have been removed from the “guf.”** This is because every Jew must reveal to the world his portion in the Torah for the geulah to happen. This coincides fantastically with the words of Shlomo HaMelech: “עשות ספרים הרבה אין קץ”—it is necessary to publish many sefarim to reveal every Jew’s chiddushim, because the “קץ”—the time for the geulah—will not arrive until they are revealed.

The Weeping of the Lower Waters Will Be Revealed Prior to the Geulah

Let us continue on this sacred pilgrimage to explain the weeping of the lower waters. Here is the text in parshas Toldos describing the enormous efforts and struggles of the holy Avos to dig wells (Bereishis 26, 18):

“וישב יצחק ויחפור את בארות המים אשר חפרו בימי אברהם אביו ויסתמום פלשתים אחרי מות אברהם, ויקרא להן שמות כשמות אשר קרא להן אביו. ויחפרו עבדי יצחק בנחל וימצאו שם באר מים חיים, ויריבו רועי גרר עם רועי יצחק לאמר לנו המים, ויקרא שם הבאר עשק כי התעשקו עמו, ויחפרו באר אחרת ויריבו גם עליה ויקרא שמה שטנה, ויעתק משם ויחפור באר אחרת ולא רבו עליה ויקרא שמה רחובות, ויאמר כי עתה הרחיב ה' לנו ופרינו בארץ.”

And Yitzchak returned and he dug the wells of water which they had dug in the days of Avraham his father and which the Pelishtim had stopped up after Avraham’s death; and he called them by the same names that his father had called them. Yitzchak’s servants dug in the valley and found there a well of fresh water. The herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Yitzchak’s herdsmen saying, “The water is ours,” so he called the name of the well Esek because

they vied with him. Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over it also; so he called its name Sitnah. He relocated from there and dug another well; and they did not quarrel over it, so he called its name Rechovos, and said, “For now Hashem has granted us ample space, and we will be fruitful in the land.”

The Ramban wonders why the Torah went to such great lengths to describe the wells dug by Yitzchak. At first glance, it does not appear to teach us anything special or meritorious about Yitzchak. The Ramban, however, explains that the three wells dug by Yitzchak’s servants represent the three Batei Mikdash. Accordingly, there were quarrels over the first two wells—**Esek and Sitnah**. This gibes with the reality that the first two Batei Mikdash were destroyed. The third well, **Rechovos**, which was not contested, represents the third Beis HaMikdash, which will remain extant forever.

I would like to expand on this notion based on the writings of the Sefas Emes (Toldos 5647). He explains beautifully the teaching of his grandfather, the Chiddushei HaRim, zy”a, the subject of the wells dug by the holy Avos. He notes at the beginning of creation the entire world was inundated with water, as it is written (ibid. 1, 2): **“ורוח אלקים מרחפת על פני”**—**and the spirit of G-d hovered above the surface of the water**. On the third day of creation, however, it says (ibid. 9): **“ויאמר אלקים יקוו המים מתחת השמים אל מקום אחד ותראה היבשה ויהי”**—**G-d said, “Let the waters be gathered beneath the heavens into one area, and let the dry land appear.”** And it was so.

The Sefas Emes explains this based on the following teaching in the Midrash (B.R. 1, 1): **The Torah declares: “I was the craftsman’s tool (blueprint) of HKB”H” . . . HKB”H would look in the Torah and create the world.** Additionally, the Torah is compared to water, as they expounded in the Gemara (Ta’anis 7a): **“ואין מים אלא תורה, שנאמר הוי כל צמא לכו”**—**and there is no water other than words of Torah, as it is stated (Yeshayah 55, 1): “Ho! Everyone that is thirsty go to the water (Torah).”** So, since the world was created with the Torah, and the Torah is compared to water, the world was initially inundated with water. Therefore, it says: **“And**

the spirit of G-d hovered above the surface of the water”—reflecting the revelation of HKB”H through the light of the Torah without any “hester panim”—divine concealment—like it is in the heavens.

Notwithstanding, the purpose of creation is for the light of Hashem and the light of Torah to be concealed down on earth within nature. Only in this manner, will man have the freedom to choose between good and, chas v’shalom, the opposite. Also, it compels him to toil in the study of Torah. For, only in the merit of Torah-study is man able to overcome the yetzer hara. Therefore, G-d commanded: **“יקוו המים מתחת השמים אל”**—**מקום אחד ותראה היבשה**—that the water gather into certain areas and allow the dry land to appear. In other words, the water of Torah was to remain concealed and covered up within the earth. Outwardly, only the dust of the earth, which covers the spiritual water, is apparent. That is until man comes along and digs through the material, earthly layers in order to reveal the light of the Torah, the wellspring of life—the “be’er mayim chayim”—concealed within.

This explains why the holy Avos made a strenuous effort to dig up the physical earth. They wished to reveal the **“באר מים חיים”**—**the well of fresh water**—the source of life, the divine light of Torah concealed within the depths of the earth. The Pelishtim, however, representing the forces of impurity, filled them up with dirt, attempting to prevent the divine light of Torah from shining through. Ultimately, the Avos’s efforts proved successful. They found the “be’er mayim chayim”—revealing the light of Hashem—and paved the way for all of Yisrael to continue to do so throughout all future generations. This is the gist of the Sefas Emes’s explanation.

The Elation of the Lower Waters

With immense satisfaction, we have shed some light on the reason for the great joy associated with the **Simchas Beis HaShoeivah**. We have explained that the water libation on the mizbeiach is a meaningful consolation for the weeping, lower waters who long to be closer to HKB”H. Based on what we have just learned, we can suggest that the **“upper waters”** are the portions of the Torah (compared to water) that

HKB"H brought down for Yisrael from the heavens at Matan Torah. In contrast, the **"lower waters"** are the portions of the Torah still hidden in the depths of the earth and covered up by the earthliness and materialism of Olam HaZeh. They are the waters that HKB"H **gathered into certain areas and allowed the dry land to appear and cover them** during the process of creation. Hence, they weep and beseech HKB"H to also be revealed on the face of the earth. Then, Jews will be able to serve Hashem with them just as they serve Him with the upper waters.

Now, we have learned that Chag HaSuccos aligns with Yaakov Avinu, in whose merit the third Beis HaMikdash will be built. We have also learned that the future geulah will only come after all the Torah-related chiddushim represented by the **"lower waters"** will be revealed. Thus, the water libations performed on Chag HaSuccos are a symbolic gesture to reveal the portions of the Torah that are still concealed within the depths of the earth. When this is accomplished, we will merit the complete geulah accompanied by the building of the third Beis HaMikdash.

This explains very nicely why our sages of blessed memory instituted that we complete the annual cycle of Torah-

readings on Shemini Atzeres and celebrate Simchas Torah. On that joyous occasion, every Jew is called up to the Torah symbolizing that all the portions of the Torah still hidden beneath the earth should be revealed this year. That is the true meaning of completing the entire Torah.

It gives me great pleasure to finish this discussion with the statement of the navi (ibid. 11, 9): **לא ירעו ולא ישחיתו בכל הר' קדשי, כי מלאה הארץ דעה את ה' כמים לים מכסים**—**they will neither injure nor destroy in all of My holy mountain, for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of Hashem as water covering the seabed.** The comments of the Sefas Emes above illuminate the words of the navi brilliantly. He is informing us that le'asid la'vo, the light of the Torah will be revealed and will be apparent even in this material, earthly world. There will no longer be "hester panim"; we will once again achieve the level of spirituality that existed at the beginning of creation. At that time, the entire world was inundated with water, since the light of the Torah shone without any obstruction or concealment. Thus, the lower waters will be fully and truly consoled by having been revealed to the world, and we will merit a complete geulah—swiftly, in our times! Amen.

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