

Water Party Ecstasy

PARSHA INSIGHTS - PINCHAS (5759)

WHY DOES THE TORAH PRESCRIBE A "WATER FESTIVITY?"

Rashi on 29:18 cites the *Gemara Taanis* 2B, that our verses hint to the water pouring ceremony of *Succos* [Feast of Booths]. This is known as “*Nisuch Hamayim*” [The Water Pouring]; the fifth *perek* [chapter] of *Gemara Succa* describes it in detail. The jubilation witnessed in the *Bais Hamikdosh* [Temple] during *Succos* was indescribable. “Whoever did not see the *Simchas Bais Hasho’aiva* [rejoicing at the water drawing] never saw celebration in his life” (*Mishna Succa* 51A). The entire service centered around water. Rav Moshe Feinstein wonders: what is the big deal? Why was such a major production made? He describes the *mitzvah* [commandment] as one which “was worth practically no money.” What is the hidden message of *Nisuch Hamayim*?

One answer is that *Nisuch Hamayim* shows the need to serve Hashem with whatever a person owns, however little it may be. A poor man cannot claim that he is unable to get close to his Creator. He might think that due to lack of funds, he is not capable of fulfilling *mitzvos* [commandments] properly. This mistaken notion is proven untrue by the spectacular *Nisuch Hamayim* ritual. Its entire focus is on plain water! In fact, the *Bnai Yisroel* [the Children of Israel] as a community flock to the *Bais Hamikdosh* to participate in this significant *mitzvah*. (It is not being observed by a mere individual.)

The destitute person can deduce from this that he should put forth all his efforts for *Avodas* [service of] Hashem, regardless of his modest financial means. His contribution to Hashem's service can be in the form of bodily actions, plus he is able to devote at least small sums of money to *mitzvos*, according to his circumstances. THE GREATEST ECSTASY IN THE WORLD IS THE REALIZATION THAT EVERY PERSON CAN ATTAIN SPIRITUAL PERFECTION ACCORDING TO HIS MEANS. This, says Rav Moshe, is the water festivity on *Succos*. It is a *mitzvah* performed with water, symbolizing the participation of every single Jew in the work of Hashem, even those whose bank accounts allow no more than “mere water”. That is why it is considered the epitome of joy for *Klal Yisroel* [the Jewish people].

Please keep this *d’var Torah* [lesson] in mind for *Succos*; it is only a few months from now!

By Rabbi Moshe Heigh

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