



Haazinu; Sukkos 2022

The Water of Life

5 minute read | Straightforward

Symbolism plays an essential role in human culture. Through symbols, we find meaning in the physical world, which becomes transparent and reveals the transcendent. Certain symbols are cultural universals, primal archetypes intuitively understood that derive from the unconscious and require no explanation, like mother and child or light and darkness.

As the Torah draws to its close, Moshe says goodbye with a timeless ballad laced with beautiful metaphor and symbolism:

יַעֲרֹף כַּמָּטָר לִקְחִי, תִּזְלַח כַּטַּל אֶמְרָתִי, כְּשֶׁעִירָם עָלַי-דְּשָׁא, וְכִרְבִּיבִים עָלַי-עֶשֶׂב – May my discourse come down as rain; my speech distill as dew; like showers on young vegetation; like droplets on the grass. (32:2)

Many ancient cultures believed that water is the source of life, that rain and water are life-giving, and that water symbolizes cleansing, regeneration, renewal, fertility, birth, creation, and new life. Water symbolizes the universal reservoir of all possible existence, supports every creation, and even precedes their form. The Torah's creation myth aligns with this archetype, with primordial water everywhere, from which everything subsequently emerges:

וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ וְחֹשֶׁךְ עַל-פְּנֵי תְהוֹם וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל-פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם – The earth being unformed and void, with darkness over the surface of the deep, and the spirit of God hovered over the waters... (1:4)

The Mikvah ritual bath is central to Judaism and draws heavily on this archetype, symbolizing rebirth and renewal. Moreover, with our knowledge of the water cycle, we have learned the literal truth of water as the solvent of life and regeneration; and in fact, the search for liquid water in the universe serves as a close proxy to the search for life beyond our planet.

But Moshe doesn't say the Torah is like water; he compares the Torah to rain – יַעֲרֹף כַּמָּטָר לִקְחִי. They do have a lot in common; both are life-giving, cleansing, regenerative, restorative, and like rain, the Torah came from the sky to affirm and sustain us. So sure, the Torah is like rain!

But Moshe doesn't simply say that the Torah is like rain; he says it's also like dew – יַעֲרֹף כַּמָּטָר לִקְחִי, תִּזְלַח כַּטַּל אֶמְרָתִי.

But what is dew, if not just another form of rain and water?

To unlock the symbol and discover the meaning, we must establish the technical difference between rain and dew.

Dew occurs when you have a cold object in a warm environment. As the object's exposed surface cools by radiating heat, atmospheric moisture condenses faster than it evaporates, resulting in the formation of water



droplets on the surface. In other words, a cold object in a warm environment can draw moisture out of the ambient surroundings.

There's a Torah that's like rain, that comes from the sky, and that hopefully, you've experienced at times, perhaps a flash of inspiration that came out of nowhere, the moments you feel alive. But that doesn't happen to everyone, and even when it does, it doesn't happen all the time. To borrow rain's imagery, this kind of inspiration is seasonal only. If you're counting on the rain to get by, what happens when the rain stops?

Perhaps precisely because of this problem, there's a Torah that we can experience that feels more like dew. A warm environment that doesn't come from the sky, that we can generate and cultivate ourselves, and which draws out the life-affirming properties from within and around us.

R' Simcha Bunim m'Peshischa notes that we can't expect our efforts and interactions with Torah to have an instant magical transformational effect like a rain shower; it's far more subtle, like dew. A morning's dew is not enough to nourish a plant, but with the regular appearance of morning dew, the days stack up, and despite no noticeable daily effect, the plant will grow.

As R' Shlomo Farhi points out, dew is gentle, not overwhelming. Plants can't survive forever on dew alone, but it can be enough to keep them going until the rains return. When you are running cold, a warm atmosphere will nurture and sustain you, but you should remember that it can't take you all the way; there will come the point that you need to proactively follow through with renewed drive and desire to grow once more.

The Torah conditions timely rain on the product of outward effort:

– וְהָיָה אִם־שָׁמַעַתְּ מְצֻוֹתַי אֲשֶׁר אֶנְכִי מְצַוֶּה אֶתְכֶם הַיּוֹם לֵאמֹר לֵבְבְכֶם וּבְכָל־נַפְשְׁכֶם. וְנָתַתִּי מִטְר־אֲרָצְכֶם בְּעֵתוֹ
If then, you obey the commandments that I enjoin upon you this day, loving the Lord your God and serving Him with all your heart and soul, I will grant the rain for your land in season... (11:13,14)

The Ishbitzer suggests that dew is a product of internal effort, a reflection of our hearts and minds. Subconsciously, our hearts and minds hope and pray, day and night, without stop. When you so much as hope for the best, or that things turn out okay, or even whisper “Please, God,” those thoughts bring wisps of warm vitality into the world that affirm and sustain growth and life. Given the mythical potency of dew and its connection to humble yet persistent origins, our sages suggest that, of all things, dew contains the latent power to resurrect the dead at the End of Days.

There are times you'll have flashes of divine inspiration, but at some point, that's going to dry up. Reassuringly, as Moshe said so long ago, it doesn't just come from the sky; it can emerge slowly with determination and environmental support. Perhaps then, dew is the symbol of human-driven inspiration – אֲתַעְרוּתָא דְלַתְתָּא.

Half the year we pray for rain, but half the year we also pray for dew; remember that you are more like a plant than a robot. You have fallow and fruitful seasons, needing different things at different times; a light drizzle right now, a little more sun next week. It is a design feature, not a flaw, and is a far healthier approach to adopt than perpetual sameness.

This isn't cutesy wordplay; the metaphor is quite explicit. If Moshe's words are the water, then we are the grass and leaves, the tree of life itself, encouraged to endure and grow strong – כְּשֶׁעִירָם עָלֵי־דְשָׁא, וְכַרְבִּיבִים עָלֵי־עֵשֶׂב –



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When you go into the woods, you see all kinds of trees. One is stunted, another is bent; you understand it was obstructed or didn't get enough light, and so it turned out that way. You don't get emotional about it, you allow it; that's just the way trees are. But humans are like that too – כי האדם עץ השדה. All too often, rather than accept ourselves and others, we are critical, whether self-conscious or judgmental, critical of a way of being other humans for the way they are. But humans are like trees; this one was obstructed like this, that one didn't get enough that, so they turned out that way.

Trees lose their leaves in the cold dark winters, but they do not despair, secure in the knowledge that spring will return before long and they will blossom once again. You might be in the thick of winter, but hold on; you too will blossom once again.

If you're waiting for inspiration or a sign, it might be a while, it might not come at all, or this might be it.

Cultivate an environment around yourself with structure, systems, and people that will foster, nurture, and support your growth. You will not rise to the level of your goals; you will fall to the level of your systems. It's simply unsustainable to have big goals with no supporting infrastructure.

Your goal should not be to beat the game but to stay in the game and continue playing so that you can in turn foster a gentle and nurturing environment that will warm others too.

Moshe's timeless blessing is hauntingly beautiful and refreshingly real. Moshe speaks through the ages and reminds us the Torah is not just water, the stuff of life. It is the water we need in good times and the dew that gets us through hard times.

The metaphor itself acknowledges and validates that there are times the rains just won't come. But in the moments where the Torah won't be our rain, it can be our dew.

How to Not Kill Your Family

6 minute read | Straightforward

There is a treasured custom in some communities for parents to bless their children before kiddush on Friday night. Traditionally, fathers will bless their sons to be like Ephraim and Menashe and their daughters like the Matriarchs.

It's not hard to understand why we'd want our daughters to be like the Matriarchs; they are the role models and heroines in the stories of our greats. While we have others, such as Miriam and Devorah, the Matriarchs are a natural conceptual category that we intuitively understand.

But of all the great heroes in our heritage, why are Ephraim and Menashe, in particular, the specific role models we would want our sons to emulate?

Ephraim and Menashe occupy a distinctly unique conceptual category; they transcend a natural hierarchy. While hierarchies are inherent to family dynamics and structures, it is highly irregular to see generation



jumpers. Yet, these young boys earned parity with their uncles a generation earlier and are counted as tribes alongside Yakov's sons.

But transcending family dynamics wasn't just something that happened to them when Yakov blessed them; transcending family dynamics was a fundamental reflection of who they were.

The Bnai Yissaschar explains that every generation in Genesis suffered rivalry rooted in unequal blessings, favor, or talent, whether from God or a parent. Brothers kill each other in the case of Cain and Abel, come close to it with Yakov and Esau, and fight and fracture in every other instance. But when Yakov crossed his hands and blessed his younger grandson with the better blessing ostensibly fit for the elder without a word of protest, it was the first time a snubbed sibling didn't have a moment's thought of entitlement or jealousy.

Ephraim and Menashe showcase what is arguably the most difficult of the Ten Commandments, the commandment of envy – וְלֹא תַקְנֹד. It's difficult to practice because jealousy originates in the subconscious. The only solution is to adopt the perspective that God's blessings are abundant; not exclusive, finite, scarce, or zero-sum, that there isn't a fixed amount of happiness, health, love, or money in the world, so someone else's good fortune cannot subtract from yours, and it cannot diminish the pool of blessings available to you in the future. Ephraim and Menashe lived that in their relationship with each other.

As R' David Wolpe notes, this is the first time siblings show acceptance of inequality. It's the way the world is; we simply have to accept that there will be different distributions of blessings, gifts, talent, and luck. And the acceptance of God's gifts at unequal levels is the only way brothers succeed in not killing each other.

Put simply, their relationship with each other transcended competitive dynamics and hierarchies, and there is no better blessing to wish on our sons.

That's great, and it has merit enough to stand on its own, but it still doesn't get to the core of the matter, which is where this quality came from.

My Zaide suggested that if your father is Yakov and you are born, raised, and live in his house, it's relatively easy and not especially surprising that you follow his way. In comparison, to be born in Egypt, the crown jewel of a world devoid of spirituality and meaning, whose culture was excess and materialism, rife with lust and idolatry; and yet master the spiritual life as well as any of Yakov's sons, is the ultimate achievement.

So perhaps the blessing we wish on our children is to master both worlds – the private world of spirituality and the public world of commerce and community, participating without being consumed.

But perhaps there's something else, hiding in plain sight.

In social psychology, self-categorization theory is the concept of how we categorize and perceive ourselves and others. We categorize our role in the society as the self – “I;” the social self – “we;” and the comparative outgroup – “them.” The “us” versus “them” mentality is natural and stems from our deep evolutionary need to belong to a group in order to survive, belong, and flourish.

Where Yosef's brothers went so wrong was that they identified him as the outgroup, the other, the enemy, a threat, and not one of them. As the Sfas Emes notes, part of what was so mortifying by Yosef's grand reveal was that their threat assessment and identification had been so badly miscalibrated; Yosef may have been an



annoying, immature, troublemaker, but he had always and only ever been one of them. By not protesting at the superior blessing given to his younger brother, Menashe revealed that he understood his role as a brother and ally; he was not competing with his brother.

And here's the essential point – if Menashe learned this lesson from observing his father's life story, cast out from his family then subsequently healing, ultimately rising and magnanimously reuniting his family; then it could never be a lesson that can be repeated or passed on, and blessing our children with a quality they could not possibly hope to emulate doesn't ring true or make any sense. In that case, the blessing to our children would be to have a father like Yosef, which is self-referential and absurd, so they must have learned this lesson in a way that everyone can.

Most of us want to protect our children from struggles because if we shoulder their burdens, they'll be happier, right? Not usually. Children are happiest when parents bolster and support their children's ability to tackle life's challenging experiences.

Resilience, or better yet, antifragility is not an inherited genetic trait; it is earned and honed. It is derived from the ways children learn to think and act when they are faced with obstacles, large and small. The road to resilience comes first and foremost from children's supportive relationships with parents, teachers, and other caring adults. These relationships become sources of strength when children work through stressful situations and painful emotions.

With antifragility, we don't merely recover; we also add some other thing on top. When we're infected with a virus, we heal and become immune to subsequent infection. It is more than resilience, which is the return to a fixed state. Antifragile is a dynamic state that requires some stressor to stimulate growth

But without stimulus, we can atrophy. Moshe warned of the day the Jewish People would get too comfortable and lose their way:

וַיִּשְׁמַן יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּכְעַס וַיִּבְעַט שְׁמֵן עֲבִירָה כְּשִׂית וַיִּטֹּשׂ אֱלֹהֵהּ עֹשֶׂהוּ וַיִּגְבַּל צוּר יִשְׁעָתוֹ – So Jeshurun grew fat and kicked, you grew fat and gross and coarse, and forsook the God who made him, and spurned the Rock of his support. (32:15)

The Haggadah echoes the same by warning us of the threat of Lavan; Pharaoh is a direct threat we know to be cautious about, but a devious Lavan poses an indirect threat equally serious. If Yakov had stayed with Lavan, he might have been fabulously wealthy; and he would not have lost his life, but he would have lost his soul.

We are products of modernity, for which there is no shame; we cannot be anything other than what we are. But what defines us, and what does not? We are Jews; our history and our culture define us, not the society we live in. Our society can influence the expression of our history and our culture, and a Jew today looks different from a Jew in the Middle Ages or a Jew five centuries from now.

When our enemies threaten our very lives, “us” and “them” are self-explanatory and straightforward, but we currently live in one of the rare periods where that's not the case – thankfully! But the threat is never gone; it merely contorts itself into a different form. While everyone knows that assimilation is a silent killer, materialism is only a slightly less malignant form of assimilation but still very much within the same conceptual category.



So perhaps while “us” and “them” were faulty in Yosef’s brothers, they were rediscovered and reclaimed by Yosef and his sons; and that’s the heart of what we wish for our sons. To know who they are, to correctly identify threats, to stand up in the face of adversity, to rise to the challenge, and to thrive in overcoming it.

In our families and communities, we can and must correctly identify the “us,” who we are alongside each other, and stand up to “them,” the challenge that modern culture poses. If you cannot correctly tell “us” from “them,” then all the concomitant dangers naturally follow when we turn what should be “us” into “them” – competition, fear, jealousy, anger, alienation, and literal or metaphorical death.

Our sons will go out into the world and confront all sorts of trials we cannot imagine or prepare them for, and because they will face those challenges differently and achieve different outcomes.

So we desperately wish for them to be like Ephraim and Menashe because although neither easy nor guaranteed, their example proves that by facing challenges together, it is possible to remain brothers and allies, united in happiness with and for each other, so long as they know who they are, where they come from, and what they stand for and against.

Redeeming the Past

2 minute read | Straightforward

After Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, we have hopefully resolved to do better and be better, feeling invigorated and full of life.

Yet, in all likelihood, we return to the daily grind of everyday living with the same habits and routines we had as before. It’s not like we press the reset button and walk out on our families and communities and jobs, and we shouldn’t want to!

But what sort of change can we realistically expect to see if our lives basically stay the same?

Perhaps we can learn from the mitzvah of Sukkah that immediately follows.

The defining feature of a Sukkah is that the roof is made from unprocessed raw plant matter that creates sufficient shade. The classic example is the byproduct of the threshing floor and winery, what’s left once you’ve extracted the useful resources. What’s left isn’t waste that is disposed of; the husks and stalks can be recycled and repurposed and used for the mitzvah of Sukkah.

And that’s precisely what Teshuvah is.

It’s not realistic to make a clean break from the past, to put mistakes wholly behind you and move on. Instead, you should carry the past forward with you; mistakes can become educational steps that help us climb and reach higher if we only learn and improve, and we can evolve.

There’s an old Chassidic saying that highlights Sukkah as the only mitzvah a person does with muddy shoes; muddy shoes are the natural result of our journey through life. The dirt we pick up along the way is intimately TorahRedux | Ancient Words, Timeless Wisdom Subscriptions and feedback: Neli@TorahRedux.com



interconnected with who we are and wholly inseparable; people who have made mistakes are welcome in the Sukkah.

This may also explain why the Zohar calls the Sukkah the shade of God – God is with us in our dark moments too – צילא דמהימנותא. It may also explain why of all festivals, Sukkos, in particular, is the time of joy – the debits can turn into credits – זמן שמקתנו.

There is a mystical element here as well. The Hebrew word for husks and rind is קלפה. In Kabbalistic symbolism, souls are shining lights, and sins cloak the soul in layers of קלפה, sort of like an onion. Instead of discarding the קלפה, Teshuvah transforms it from a bad thing into a good thing.

It's not a magic trick – sins and transgressions are treated differently based on Teshuvah's motivation. The way you adapt your past mistakes materially affects the way you incorporate the lessons learned to be a better person.

The Esrog reflects this concept as well; it the choicest of the four species and a symbol of the ideal human who is great in deeds and wisdom. Yet if you cut one open, the edible fruit is tiny – the inedible rind makes up most of the mass; but that's still what an ideal person looks like. The best of us builds up plenty of rind over time, and that's simply part of what makes a beautiful Esrog.

Perhaps that's why Sukkos comes right on the back of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. We shouldn't just sink back into the same routines as before, but Teshuvah doesn't need to look like such a radical departure from the past. Change is incremental – it doesn't have to be so different from past habits and routines; maybe it's quite similar, but with small improvements and modifications.

Sukkos teaches the holistic view of how we change.

We all make mistakes.

The only real mistakes are the ones you don't learn from.

Transcending Time

3 minute read | Straightforward

From Rosh Hashana through Sukkos, honey features prominently at the festive meals. Honey is sweet, and it functions as a symbol for the sweet new year we yearn for.

But think about it for a moment, using honey is odd. Honey is sweet, but it comes from bees, which have a painful sting and are not kosher creatures.

Honey is a complex sugar; why don't we use simple cane sugar, a naturally growing plant that metabolizes into the energy that fuels all living things?

The universe operates on fundamental laws of physics that express empirical facts and describe physical properties of how the natural universe works. One such law is the law of entropy, which describes how natural states tend to undergo increasing decay and disorder over time. Eventually, all things break down.

The Midrash suggests that the notion of Teshuva predates the universe, which suggests that it is of a higher order that transcends its constraints; Teshuva is above space and time, and therefore not subject to entropy.

Creation is an environment where humans can make choices. The nature of a test is that it is challenging; you can pass or fail. As much as God can want us to pass a test, the objective fact remains that tests can and will be failed. But God is not gratuitously cruel and does not set us up to fail; the fact we can fail necessarily requires the existence of Teshuva, so failure is not the end. A person can learn from their mistakes, put it behind them, and move on.

R' Nechemia Sheinfeld explains that the supernatural aspect of Teshuva is that it unwinds the effect of time and entropy; we can repair our mistakes, removing the decay, leaving only the lesson we have learned. Teshuva is not an after-the-fact solution; it's baked into the fabric of the creation process, so redemption is structurally possible from the outset.

Existence without Teshuva would be static and stagnant – there would be no recovery from failure or setbacks, no growth, and therefore no life. Teshuva must predate existence, because that's the only way life can change and become.

With Teshuva, sins and transgressions can be recategorized based on motivation. When Teshuva is motivated by fear, sins are downgraded to accidents and oversights; when motivated by love, sins can become merits. It's intuitive; the way a person adapts their past mistakes materially affects the way you incorporate the lessons learned to be a better person.

It's a bit like learning to ride a bicycle. The first time you lose your balance, you fall and hurt yourself. Maybe next time you wear a helmet and pads, and you slowly learn how to keep your balance. If you focus on how bad falling hurts, you'll never learn to ride the bike. But once you learn to keep your balance, you forget about falling, and maybe you don't need the pads anymore. You now know how to ride a bicycle.

R' Shlomo Farhi teaches that this is why the Hebrew word for “year” – שנה – is cognate to the words שני and שניי – “secondary” and “change” respectively. Today's achievements are built on the foundations of yesterday; a repetition would be no different from what came first, and a fresh start can't carry the lessons along the way. This may help explain why we temporarily behave more diligently day between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur – a reliable foundation is the precursor of a strong building.

R' Meir Shapiro teaches that this is why specifically honey, and not sugar, is the centerpiece of the holiday imagery. Honey is kosher, despite being a product of non-kosher origins, and maybe you get stung. It's complex, not simple. But doesn't that sound a lot like Teshuvah? You made mistakes that weren't so kosher, maybe they stung a little, and they weren't so simple, but you can learn and grow from them all the same – you've made something kosher from something that's not.

As R' Nachman of Breslov taught straightforwardly: if you believe you can break, then believe you can fix.



Recreating Egypt and Sinai

2 minute read | Straightforward

One of the more forgotten laws is the mitzvah of Hakhel.

On the first day of Chol HaMoed Sukkos, two weeks after the end of the Shemitta year; every man, woman, and child would assemble to hear a public Torah reading from his personal Sefer Torah:

מִקֵּץ שִׁבְעַת שָׁנִים, בְּמַעַד שְׁנַת הַשְּׁמִטָּה—בְּחַג הַסֻּכּוֹת בְּבוֹא כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל, לִרְאוֹת אֶת-פְּנֵי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ, בַּמָּקוֹם, אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר: תִּקְרָא אֶת-הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת, נָגִיד כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל—בְּאָזְנוֹתֵיהֶם: הִקְהֵל אֶת-הָעָם, הָאֲנָשִׁים וְהַנְּשִׂיִם וְהַטַּף, וְגֵרָךְ, אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ—לְמַעַן יִשְׁמְעוּ וְלְמַעַן יִלְמְדוּ, וַיִּרְאוּ אֶת-ה' אֱלֹהֶיכֶם, וְשָׁמְרוּ לְעִשׂוֹת, אֶת-כָּל-דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת – Every seventh year, after the Shemittah year, on the festival of Sukkos... in the place that He shall choose, read the Torah before all of Israel, so they will hear it. Gather the nation – men, women, children, the stranger among you... so that they may learn and fear Hashem your G-d. (31:10-12)

It's an unusual mitzvah, in that it is fulfilled by everybody – young and old, men and women, Kohen, Levi, and Yisrael. Children aren't typically expected to observe the Torah like adults – yet the Torah not only includes them but adds additional emphasis that they are a part of this ceremony:

וּבְנֵיהֶם אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יָדְעוּ, יִשְׁמְעוּ וְלָמְדוּ לִירְאֵה אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֶיכֶם – The children who do not yet know will hear and learn to fear Hashem your God... (31:13)

Why is it important that children are a part of this mitzvah?

The Gemara says that while a child does not have the mental capacity to technically fulfill a mitzvah, there is a pedagogical benefit to their inclusion nonetheless.

The reason children must attend is simple and powerful: the Torah is for everyone – even the king, and even the children. Today, we call this principle the rule of law.

R' Shai Held considers Hakhel an orienting event that re-enacts the redemption and revelation the foundational moments of Egypt and Sinai that Judaism revolves around.

It takes place after the Shemitta year because Shemitta releases slaves and debts, and discharges mortgages and pledges.

It takes place on Sukkos because it is the time of year that everyone leaves the illusion of security and trappings of life behind, living with simplicity and vulnerability together – צִילָא דְמַהִימְנוּתָא –

It is not enough that everyone attends; they must be there “together”.

The Shem Mi'Shmuel notes that to achieve the level where we can accept the Torah once more, it takes a whole year of living in liberty and equality, free from the obsession of increasing our private property.

The Sfas Emes teaches that the effort parents have to make to bring their kids teaches the children how important it is to understand this. While it may be difficult to explain to a young child that something is important, they will understand when you show them.



The Hakhel ceremony reaffirms that beneath the details and minutiae of our lives, we cannot help but acknowledge our shared common identity and fundamental dependence on God. Accordingly, it is entirely fitting that the experience of the children is front and center.

The Torah belongs to everyone. The buildup to the moment at Sinai where the Jewish People could accept the Torah in sacred unity with one voice is reenacted every calendar cycle at Hakhel, and the Torah calls for a similar process to break the barriers down.

To build a community, you need a longer table; not a higher fence

The God of All

2 minute read | Straightforward

Judaism has several core beliefs that have been adopted by mainstream culture. Some of them were once radical beliefs that we take for granted today, such as introducing the concept of monotheism to a pagan and polytheistic world.

The ramification of one God, as opposed to many gods, is that the one God must be the God of not just everything, but also everyone.

Unlike almost every other chag, particularly Shemini Atzeres, Sukkos has a pervasive characteristic of inclusivity that reflects this.

The Gemara teaches that the biggest celebration in the Jewish calendar was the famed water drawing ceremony that marked God's judgment of rainfall for the entire world, for the entire year.

The Gemara also notes that the Sukkos sacrifices had a sequence of 70 animals, corresponding to the 70 nations of the world so that greater humanity might also enjoy a year of abundant blessing.

We may be the conduit of God's blessing to the world at large, but we are not the exclusive beneficiaries.

Unsurprisingly, the God of all also has compassion for the most distant and lost Jews.

When we wave the lulav and esrog, the different species traditionally correspond to different kinds of Jew, from the most observant to the least. But even the least observant Jew is part and parcel of the Jewish people, and both the mitzvah and the Jewish people are deficient if the apparent "undesirables" are not actively included. Hoshana Raba has a dedicated ceremony specifically constructed around a bouquet of the undesirables.

The Sfas Emes reminds us that the God of all necessarily loves us all. God's love and compassion is elemental; it is not reserved just for worthy Jews, or Jews at all. On Sukkos, all humans gather under God's protection – **הג צילה דמהימנותא**. Sitting in a sukka acts out the simplicity of our relationship with the God of all – **האסיף**.

Of all Judaism's special occasions, Sukkos is called the festival of celebration, perhaps because of the simple joy of God's love for all.



I present TorahRedux l'ilui nishmas my late grandfather, HaGaon HaRav Yehuda Leib Gertner ben HaRav HaChassid Menachem Mendel.

I hope you enjoyed this week's thoughts. If you have questions or comments, or just want to say hello, it's a point of pride for me to hear from you, and I'll always respond. And if you saw, heard, read, or watched anything that spoke to you, please send it my way - Neli@TorahRedux.com.

If you liked this week's edition of TorahRedux, why not share it with friends and family who would appreciate it?

Neli

PS - *TorahRedux is my pride and joy, the product of thousands of hours of learning, research, writing, editing, and formatting. I have been blessed to operate a niche business that allows me to dedicate a substantial amount of time to TorahRedux, and I welcome your assistance in furthering my goal to keep publishing high-quality Parsha content that makes a difference. I consult for NY home care companies, so if you have a contact in the NY home care industry, please introduce me!*

PPS - *If anyone you know is looking for a job in healthcare, please put them in touch with me. With a helping hand from Above, I have successfully helped **5 people** get jobs in healthcare so far!*

Redux: *adjective* – resurgence; refers to being brought back, restored, or revived; something familiar presented in a new way. Not to see what no one else has seen, but to say what nobody has yet said about something which everybody sees.