

# MESHECH CHOCHMAH

## Parshas Pinchas

### Nisuch Hamayim on Succos

וביום השני פרים בני בקר שנים עשר... ומנחתם ונסכיהם...  
מלבד עלת התמיד ומנחתה ונסכיהם.

*And on the second day [of Succos,] you shall offer twelve bulls, two rams and fourteen lambs... And their meal-offerings and their libations. (29:17-18)*

*[These are] aside from the continual [daily] burnt-offering, its meal-offering and their libations. (Ibid. 19)*

#### WHO ARE “THEY”?

Perek 29 deals with the additional mussaf offerings of Succos describing which animals should be offered, as well as their accompanying menachos (meal-offerings) and nesachim (libations of wine which are poured out on the mizbeach). If we look at the final word of pasuk 19 – “וְנִסְכֵיהֶם – their nesachim”, we will have a question: Seeing as there is only one korban referred to in that phrase (i.e., the daily burnt offering), why does it conclude with a plural possessive pronoun – “their nesachim”? While it is true that the earlier pesukim refer to “their menachos,” and “their nesachim” in the plural, this is because those pesukim mentions numerous korbanos. However, since our pasuk deals with only one korban,<sup>1</sup> it should have said “its nesech,” as surely as it said “מִנְחָתָה – its minchah”!

#### UNDERSTANDING NISUCH HAMAYIM

The Meshech Chochmah explains. As we know, throughout the seven days of Succos, in addition to the nesachim of wine which accompany the various korbanos, there is also a special mitzvah to pour water out on the mizbeach – known as “nisuch hamayim.” It is worthwhile contemplating: What type of korban is this nesech of water?

<sup>1</sup> The chatas (sin-offering) mentioned in the beginning of the pasuk does not have an accompanying minchah or *nesech*.

Should we ask, how many possibilities are there? The answer is, two:

- ▶ A: It is an additional nesech accompanying the daily tamid offering. Throughout the year, the Tamid is accompanied only by one nesech – of wine, while for the seven days of Succos, it has two nesachim – one of wine and one of water.
- ▶ B: It is a separate obligation of the day. As surely as there are additional mussaf offerings to be brought during Succos, there is also an additional korban in the form of a nesech of water.

Should we then proceed to ask, does it make a difference what type of korban nisuch hamayim is? The answer is, yes, for the designation of this nesech will affect its halachos in a number of ways. To cite one straightforward example:

- ▶ A nesech which accompanies a korban cannot be offered before the korban itself. If nisuch hamayim is connected to the tamid offering, then it will be unacceptable to perform it before offering the tamid.
- ▶ If it is an obligation of the day itself, one could perform this nesech even prior to offering the tamid.<sup>2</sup>

### **BACK TO OUR PASUK**

And so, having outlined the question as to what type of korban nisuch hamayim is, how are we to set about answering it? The Meshech Chochmah explains that the answer is actually right in front of us, in the final word of pasuk 19 – “וְנִסְכֵיהֶם” – and their nesachim”! We asked, seeing as there is only one korban, should it not have said “its nesech”? However, firstly, the reason the pasuk refers to nesachim in the plural is because it refers to two nesachim that are offered every day of Succos:

- ▶ The nesech of wine accompanying the tamid
- ▶ The additional nesech of water.

Moreover, by saying “their nesachim,” the pasuk is indicating that these two nesachim actually “belong” to two different entities:

- ▶ The nesech of wine is attached to the tamid, and is its nesech.
- ▶ The nesech of water is an obligation of that particular day of Succos, and is its nesech.

Since these two nesachim derive from two different entities (the tamid and the day), they are referred to collectively as “their nesachim”!

---

<sup>2</sup> An additional difference would be that, when one offers an animal as a korban, he can bring its minchah and *nesech even on a subsequent day if necessary (see Temurah 14b)*. Therefore, if *nisuch hamayim* is attached to the tamid, it could be brought on a subsequent day, while if it is an independent obligation for that day of Succos, it could not be brought after that day has passed.

---

## The Letter Vav and the Future of the World

---

וּבַיּוֹם הָרְבִיעִי פָּרִים עֲשָׂרָה... מִנְחֹתָם וְנִסְכֵיהֶם...

*And on the fourth day, ten bulls... their meal-offerings and wine-libations... (29:2-24)*

### ATTENTION TO DETAIL: ONE RULE AND TWO EXCEPTIONS

We have seen consistently that a trademark of the sefer Meshech Chochmah is R' Meir Simcha directing our attention to subtle nuances and anomalies within pesukim with which we are familiar, and then proceeding to illuminate them, bringing to bear his mastery of halachah, machshavah and parshanut.

As noted above, Perek 29 of our parsha discusses the mussaf offerings of Succos, with each of the korbanos accompanied by a minchah (meal offering) and nesech (wine-libation). The Meshech Chochmah notes that the way these accompanying offerings are presented in pesukim for most of the days is with the words “וּמִנְחֹתָם וְנִסְכֵיהֶם – and their menachos and nesachim,” with a vav. The exceptions to this rule are the fourth day and the eighth day (Shemini Atzeres), where it says “מִנְחֹתָם וְנִסְכֵיהֶם – their menachos and nesachim.” What is behind the missing vav on those two days?

### EXPLAINING THE RULE

He explains: As we know, a prominent feature of the mussafim of Succos are the seventy bulls offered over the course of the chag, which the Gemara tells us correspond to the seventy nations of the world, while the one bull offered on Shemini Atzeres corresponds to the Jewish people themselves.<sup>3</sup>

The Gemara elsewhere<sup>4</sup> states that although a gentile can bring korbanos, he can only bring menachos and nesachim in conjunction with an animal offering, but not by themselves. This is in contrast to Bnei Yisrael, who can bring these as independent korbanos. It is for this reason the pesukim describing the mussafim of Succos state “וּמִנְחֹתָם וְנִסְכֵיהֶם,” with a vav – “and their menachos and nesachim”. Since these korbanos correspond to the nations of the world, their presentation in the pesukim reflects the way a gentile can bring those korbanos, i.e. specifically with the menachos and nesachim attached to the korbanos themselves.

### EXPLAINING THE EXCEPTIONS

Having explained the rule, we now come to the exceptions. To begin with Shemini Atzeres: based on the above, we can understand why its menachos and nesachim are not introduced with a vav. Since the one bull-offering on Shemini Atzeres corresponds to Bnei Yisrael – who can bring those items separately – their presentation in the pasuk is likewise detached from the preceding korbanos.

But what about the fourth day? The korbanos of that day are also part of Succos,

---

3 See Succah 55b.

4 *Menachos 73b.*

corresponding therefore to the nations of the world. Why, then, are their menachos and nesachim written without the vav?

The answer, says Meshech Chochmah, lies in the fact that ten of the seventy root nations of the world originally lived in land which is ultimately promised to the Jewish People as the Land of Israel.<sup>5</sup> These ten nations are represented by the ten bulls which are offered on the fourth day of Succos. Indeed, it is appropriate that the fourth day, which is the middle of the seven days of Succos, should parallel the land of Israel which is the center of the world.<sup>6</sup> In light of the fact that the land associated with those ten nations will ultimately be inherited by the Jewish people, they have a significant connection with the korbanos offered on that day. This connection is reflected in the menachos and nesachim of that day being written in a “Bnei Yisrael” way – without a vav!

---

5 See Bereishis 15:19-20 with Rashi.

6 See Midrash Tanchuma Parshas Kedoshim sec. 10.