

Sukkot: The Holiday of Water
by: Mark Cohn

It's all about the water for us. Just try to make a bagel without water.
Water is mayim chayim - the source of life.
It gives us sustenance and it birthed our people.
We pray for it in the winter and we rejoice with it during Sukkot.
We have quarreled, complained, kvetched, and griped about water and oh how our ancestors could have used the incredible Israeli inventions of today that literally take water out of thin air.

Water: you can't have enough of it and in some cases you can have too much.
It's totally portable but sometimes not potable.
Show me a civilization and I'll show you people who knew how to handle water. Whether limited supplies or copious quantities - it's water that keeps us alive.

But never have the calls for safe and sufficient water been as severe as today with a climate crisis that is changing shorelines and sources of this vital life stream. Sukkot calls upon us to remember, celebrate, and hold as precious water. And after three weeks of welcoming the New Year, our festival Shemini Atzeret calls our attention to the One who causes the rains to return and the rain to fall. After all of our teshuvat ha-nefesh, we pray God will do the hashavat ha-ruach to bring the vital replenishment of geshem (rain) to our arid spaces and depleted cisterns.

May our repentance bring us renewal and may we bring ourselves and our earth into healing and wholeness.