

**Noseh:** Rain and Succot

**Chevraya:** Aleph

**Materials: ALEPH:** Straws, bowls, cups, water, 6 cheap plastic water guns

**Goals:** To teach chanichim

1. About the importance of water in life,
2. Why Hashem chose a land without a steady water supply
3. The connection of water and Succot.

### **Background:**

Since the beginning of civilization water has played a large role in determining where settlements can occur. Bereshit describes how Gan Eden was surrounded by four rivers. Mesopotamia, the Cradle of Civilization and the original home of Avraham, is bounded by the Tigris and Euphrates. Early man did not have the means to transport water over great distances, so all settlements needed a regular supply of water nearby. Eventually methods were developed to move water from rivers and lakes to areas where it was lacking: irrigation, aqueducts, and modern plumbing systems.

In general, the Middle East is an arid area. Water resources tend to be scarce. Other than Mesopotamia, Turkey is the only country in the area with a sufficient water supply. The lack of water is sometimes hard to comprehend to people from North America, where there is a great abundance of water. Someone in Michigan or Ontario, areas where you can hardly drive for 20 miles without hitting a freshwater body, might have trouble with this concept. However, it is specifically in the Middle East, an area where this most vital of all human needs is not readily available, that God chose to plant Am Yisrael. Even more, the capital – Yerushalayim – also lacks a good source of water. Chezkiyahu had a water tunnel built when Yerushalayim was coming under siege specifically for this reason – there was no source of water in the city.

The Torah (Devarim Perek 11, Pesukim 10-12) tells us that the reason God chose Eretz Yisrael for the Jews was specifically due to the lack of water. God wanted us to have a personal relationship with Him, and to this end He wanted us to have to ask Him daily for things we need. By not having a steady supply of water, we are forced to turn to God and ask Him to provide for us. By doing so, we help create a relationship with Him. We see that the two main things promised to Am Yisrael if they follow the mitzvot are peace and plentiful water. The Rishonim argue which of these is primary, and according to many opinions peace can only happen once there is enough water and there is no reason for fights over water to continue. Clearly water plays a very important role not only in the survival of civilization but also in peaceful living.

In modern day Israel the same concerns still exist. One of the first major water projects undertaken was the National Water Carrier, which allowed water from the Kineret to be brought down to the Negev. One of the main concerns and sticking points of the peace process is division of water resources, primarily the aquifers and access to the Kineret. Water continues to play a huge role in our existence, and the importance of having plentiful rain still exists and continues to bring us close to God.

### **Peulah**

#### **Game 1: National Water Carrier**

This game is a relay race which can get a little wet. It's probably a good idea not to play this inside an actual Beit Knesset, but rather outside in the hall or in a place without carpeting. Divide the chanichim into two teams. Each team member gets a drinking straw and has a number of cups filled with water on one side of the room. On the other side, each team is designated a bowl. One at a time, a member of each team must suck up water into his straw, run across the room, and empty the straw into the bowl. Then he must return to the other side and tag the next teammate, who does the same. First team to fill up their bowl wins.

**Explanation:**

Water is the most important resource in the world – every person must drink about 2 liters of water a day to be healthy. *Ask chanichim what they need water for* (washing, cleaning, netilat yadaim, cooking, brushing teeth, drinking, perhaps one day running your car...) We take our water very seriously – just ask someone who didn't have water during the great blackout of '03 how it felt. Water is also one of the major problems in Israel. We don't have very much of it, and what we do have is mostly located in the Galil in the Kineret. To deal with this problem, Israel decided in 1953 to build the National Water Carrier, a system designed to pump water from the Kineret to places in Israel with less water. This is what we just reenacted by carrying water from an area with water to one without. The NWC is a little cleaner, yough, and a little longer- 130 kilometers, or 81 miles, long! Despite Israel's efforts to manage its water, we still often end up without enough. What we really need in Israel is enough rain to suffice, which unfortunately we don't always get.

**Game 2: Blindfold Obstacle Course**

Choose one chanich to negotiate an obstacle course. Blindfold him and start him on one side of the room. Give the other chanichim a minute to set up obstacles in the middle of the room. These obstacles could be chairs, people, shoes, etc. For the first rounds, have the chanichim only place one or two obstacles, and nothing that the blindfolded person could get hurt with. Instruct the blindfold chanich that he must get from one side of the room to the other hitting as few obstacles as possible. Let one or two chanichim do the obstacle course in this way. Then, blindfold someone and let the chanichim put more obstacles in the way. But this time, the blindfolded person can ask as many yes or no questions as he likes. So, for example, he can ask if he is able to take 5 steps forward. The chanichim yell out the answers depending on whether it is possible or not. (Occasionally there will be different answers, in which case the chanich must judge what to do). It is possible that the chanich could ask before every single step, but this would take longer. The other chanichim are only allowed to respond to questions the one chanich asks, can only say yes or no, and cannot volunteer information. See who can get through the obstacle course fastest, and with hitting the least obstacles.

**Explanation:**

*What was the difference between the first people who went (without asking questions) and the second people who went (with asking questions)? Which was faster? Which was more fun? Which was more exciting? Which was more satisfying? Which way were you more a part of the group, and which way were you on your own? While in some*

ways, the first way was easier, and it might have been faster, the second way, with asking questions, allowed the person to accomplish more than he would have otherwise, and also created a connection between the blindfolded person and the group giving the instructions- you knew that there were people who cared about you, who wanted you to do well. *So- is it better to have things easy and be on your own, or to have help, even though you have to ask for it?* Even though before this you might have thought that it's better if you just have everything handed to you, we now understand that there are big advantages to the other way. *Before we talked about the importance of water and how Israel doesn't have a lot of water. Can you think of why Hashem chose a country that doesn't have a lot of water available as our homeland?* In Israel, we need to ask God for rain. Just like in the game, having to ask questions of God means we have a stronger relationship with God, and that we can really accomplish more than if we had been given everything we need.

**Mother May I?** For younger chanichim, another game that can work very well is Mother May I: Choose one person to play "Mother." Mother lines up the children in a straight line and then moves to the other side of the room and stands facing the group. The chanichim move toward Mother by asking permission to take steps in order. For example, a child could ask, "Mother May I take ten baby steps forward?" Encourage children to be creative with the types of steps they want to take. Some common choices are regular steps, giant steps, and baby steps. The game is much more fun if kids want to take ballerina steps or frog steps. Mother answers, "Yes, you may" or "No, you may not," and the child must once again ask "Mother May I" and wait for Mother to respond "Yes you may" before following her commands. If the child moves when she has not been given permission, she must go back to the starting line. Now here's an additional twist- have Mother choose one person who will not have to ask permission, and can just go whenever they want. The game is won when someone reaches Mother. Let the game go until you have a first, second and third place winner (i.e. three people who reach Mother), and then choose another Mother.

**Explanation:**

*Which person had the easiest time winning? Was the game more fun for that person or less? Did that person enjoy the game with the group as much? Even though it was much easier for the person who didn't have to ask any questions, they missed out on the fun of the whole game!! Part of the fun was the "children" asking questions and "Mother" answering them. Who is the person in the world you'd most like to meet and ask some questions to? Do you think you'd like it better if someone got them to write down all the answers on a piece of paper, and give them to you, or if you'd get to meet the person and ask the questions in person? Why is there a difference? You get the answers either way! Of course, it's cooler to actually meet them. The point is- sometimes it's better to be able to ask the questions than to be just given all the answers. Before we talked about the importance of water and how Israel doesn't have a lot of water. Can you think of why Hashem chose a country that doesn't have a lot of water available as our homeland? In Israel, we need to ask God for rain. Just like in the game, having to ask questions of God means we have a stronger relationship with God- we get to really talk to him, and not just have all the answers given to us!*

### **Game 3: Tefila for Rain**

The instructions for Game #1's room conditions apply here too. Divide the chanichim into two teams, and give each team three small, cheap, plastic water guns (if you get more, that's even better). Line both teams up on one side of the room, and line up ten cups in front of each team. Instruct them that each team member must take one shot and then pass the gun on down the line. A madrich will take guns from the end of the line and bring them back to the start. When guns get empty, teams must send a member to refill. Tell the teams that they must try to push the cups as far as possible. At the end of a certain time limit, all distance will be added up and whichever team has gained the most overall ground will win.

**Explanation:** Teams may utilize various strategies to succeed at this game. One team may try to shoot all cups equally, while another may focus on pushing a few cups as far as possible. As some players succeed more than others, fire might need to be focused on the weaker side of the line. The point is that different areas will need to be sprayed at different times. Similarly, not all parts of earth need rain at the same time. The rainy season in Israel isn't the same as the season in America. In tefila, we have a specific time when we start praying for rain. On Shmini Atzeret we start saying Morid HaGashem, recalling the need for rain. However, we don't actually start asking for rain until later. In Israel they start saying V'Ten Tal U'Matar L'vracha on 7 Cheshvan, while outside of Israel we only start on December 5<sup>th</sup>. The reason is because people used to go to Israel for Sukkot, and needed enough time to journey home. It took them a long time to travel, and if it started to rain during that time, traveling would have been a mess. Nonetheless, when we pray for rain, we are asking for rain in Israel.