

Pshats for Shots

A project of JewishDrinking.com

Welcome

Welcome to the eighth issue of "Pshats for Shots", a one-page resource for helping providing brief, drinking-related *divrei Torah* for each parashah. Wonderful for kiddush clubs, Shabbas meals, or any other gathering in which you need to turn to *al regel ahat* parashah-related *divrei Torah*, "Pshats for Shots" is a project of JewishDrinking.com. An archive of Pshats for Shots is available at <http://jewishdrinking.com/pshats-for-shots-parashah-sheets/>



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What's up with Ya'akov's libating? And with which liquid did he libate?

We read of Ya'akov setting-up a stone-pillar towards the beginning of last week's parashah (Gen. 28.18), as well as later on in the parashah (Gen. 31.51-52). In this week's parashah, we see him doing so a third time, yet he introduces an innovation into his stone-pillar setting-up: "וַיִּצַב יַעֲקֹב מִצְבֵּה, בְּמָקוֹם אֲשֶׁר-דִּבֶּר אֲתוֹ-מִצְבֹּת אָבִן; וַיִּסֹּף עָלֶיהָ נֶסֶךְ, וַיִּצַק עָלֶיהָ שֵׁמֶן And Ya'akov set up a pillar at the site where He had spoken to him, a pillar of stone, and he libated a libation on it and poured oil upon it" (Gen. 35.14). What's going on for Ya'akov in innovating for his third stone-pillar?

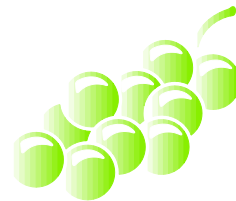
Abraham ibn Ezra (1089-1167) suggests that he libated the stone-pillar with "מים או יין. והטעם שרחץ" with either wine or water, and the reason was to wash the stone-pillar, and then followed it up with pouring the oil over it" (אבן עזרא), with which Nahmanides agrees (רמב"ן).

While the suggestion of water for the libation makes sense within the context of washing off the stone-pillar prior to Ya'akov's oil-pouring, it doesn't seem to make sense considering that most of the libations throughout the rest of the Torah are

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done with wine, whether in the Book of Exodus, Leviticus, or most of Numbers (there is one exception, which I will discuss when we get to it (but it's not water)). This is probably why both Rabbi David Kimhi (1160-1235) (רד"ק) and Ovadiah ben Jacob Sforno (1475-1550) (ספורנו) write that it was with wine.

While it is still unclear as to why or how Ya'akov came up with the idea for libating wine on the stone-pillar prior to pouring oil on it, Rabbi Ovadiah ben Jacob Sforno mentions that "כי בזה הכין את המקום שראוי שיקימנה שם ענין" "What he did here was similar to what David did in his time when he prepared the foundation for the Temple his son Solomon was to build after his death in accordance with what the angel had told him at the threshing ground of Arona the Jebusite."

One possibility as why wine-libating could be powerful is that wine, just like oil, is no simple product; both require pressing of the fruits and other humanly involvement, whereas water is something that is merely drawn. Furthermore, both wine and oil are precious products, so that pouring them out is truly giving of one's own precious materials in a demonstration of sacrificing to God.

Shabbat shalom!

Drinking Halakhah of the Week

Following last week's Drinking Halakhah of the Week (concerning not blessing further wine within the meal (see (ש"ע אר"ח קע"ד:ד)), I received some comments that it's not so clear-cut and that there may be further blessings required. Yes, there exists the possibility that one may need to bless ברכת הטוב והמטיב the blessing of The Good and Who Makes Good, which I will certainly cover in the future (there is an entire section dedicated to it in the Shulhan Arukh (it's the subsequent section)).

More relevantly to our discussion is, as someone else pointed out to me, the directly subsequent halakhah in the Shulhan Arukh: "כל מה ששותה בתוך הסעודה די לו בברכה אחת אלא אם כן כשירך לא היה דעתו Everything that one drinks within the meal is sufficient for that person with one blessing, except for the situation when one blesses with the intention of only drinking that particular cup of wine and then diverted his attention from drinking another cup of wine" (ש"ע אר"ח קע"ד:ה), then he would need to bless on another cup.

From this halakhah, it seems that last week's halakhah was focused on pointing out that despite the seeming separation of the meal beginning potentially cutting off the efficacy of the pre-meal wine's blessing to extend into the wine consumed within the meal, nevertheless, the pre-meal's wine blessing does, indeed, extend to cover the wine within the meal.



From this week's halakhah, however, what we see is that one may need to bless over the wine on subsequent glasses if one hadn't had those future glasses in mind. (stay tuned for next week's comment of Rabbi Isserles on this text)

If you are or know of someone who struggles with alcohol abuse, alcoholism, or other substance abuse, there are resources out there to help. You can check out <http://jewishdrinking.com/alcoholabuse/>

"Because man does not live on bread alone" (Deut. 8.3)

JewishDrinking.com is a new project, begun in the fall of 2019 to serve as the #1 resource for texts, wisdom, and more on drinking in the Jewish tradition. With source sheets, weekly parashah sheets, weekly podcast/video episodes with guests, articles, and more, JewishDrinking.com seeks to shed light on this human activity. If you have comments, questions, suggestions, on either this parashah sheet and/or the website, please email Drew@JewishDrinking.com – ideas are welcome! *Le'chaim!*