

Pshats for Shots

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A Land Flowing with Milk and Honey

In this week's parashah, while we find neither drinking, nor wine, we do read of a different beverage: "וְאָרֶז לְהַצִּילוֹ | מִיַּד מִצְרַיִם וְלְהַעֲלֹתוֹ מִן־הָאֶרֶץ הַהוּא אֶל־אֶרֶץ טוֹבָה וְרַחֲבָה אֶל־אֶרֶץ זָבַת חֵלֶב וּדְבַשׁ אֶל־מְקוֹם הַפְּנִיעוּנִי | וְהַחֲתִי וְהָאֲמֹרִי וְהַכְּנִזִּי וְהַיְבוּסִי I have come down to rescue them from the Egyptians and to bring them out of that land to a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey, the region of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the

Hivites, and the Jebusites" (Ex. 3.8). This is the first appearance of the phrase in the Torah, with three subsequent appearances in Exodus (3.17, 13.5, and 33.3), one in Leviticus (20.24), one in Numbers (14.8), and several in Deuteronomy (6.3, 11.9, 26.9, 26.15, and 27.3), but what does it mean or signify?

We have to first understand the milk here is most likely goat milk and not cow milk, so the land under discussion would need to have good grazing for goats, as well as some topographical diversity. We also need to understand that the honey is not bee honey, but date honey, so there would be good growing conditions for trees. These explanations are provided for us by Rabbi Moshe ben Nahman, also known as Ramban (1194-1270):



טעם זבת חלב ודבש כי שבת תחלה את הארץ שהיא טובה, לומר שהאוויר טוב ויפה The meaning of flowing of milk and honey is that it is initially praising the land that it is good, which is to say that the air is good and lovely to people, and that all good will be found of it..." (רמב"ן).

Ramban specifies that the land, in order for the milk to flow, needs to be great grazing land: "ושבת אותה שהיא ארץ מקנה שיש בה מרעה טוב, והמים יפים,

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Drinking on the Daf

For those keeping up with the Daf Yomi cycle, there are a couple of discussions of drinking this past week:

- A pair of rabbis got drunk at Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi's son's party and wanted to say *Shema* in the almost-morning (*Berakhot* 9a)
- What happens when you're drinking wine and you start to say the blessing over beer, or vice versa? (*Berakhot* 12a)

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ויגדל החלב בבהמות, כי אין הבהמות בריאות וטובות ומרבות החלב רק באויר טוב ועשב רב ומים טובים And praises it that it is a land of livestock which has good grazing and beautiful water, and one can grow milk of domestic animals, since domestic animals are not healthy and good that give off plenty of milk except with good air, plentiful grass, and good water.”

And for the date honey to flow, Ramban explains that, “ כי היא עוד שמינה שפירותיה שונים Since their fruits are fat and sweet until they are flowing throughout it with their honey.”

Thus, according to Ramban, the land flowing of milk and honey is a shorthand way of describing good agricultural conditions for fruit-growing, as well as good land conditions for grazing livestock. It’s a great land for both growing flora and raising fauna.

🎙️ New Podcast/Video Episode 🧠



“Kosher Craft Beer in the Late 2010s” featuring Rabbi Avraham Pressburger, creator of KosherCraftBeer.com

Drinking Halakhah of the Week

What does one need to do regarding drinking in the course of a meal?



According to Rabbi Yosef Karo (1488-1575) in his *Shulhan Arukh*: “ אם אין לו יין ושותה מים או שאר משקה אין לברך עליהם דחשיבי כבאים מחמת הסעודה לפי שאין דרך לאכול בלא שתיה ואף יין לא היה צריך ברכה לפניו אלא מפני שהוא חשוב וקובע ברכה לעצמו אבל מים או שאר משקין לא חשיבי ואינם טעונים ברכה If one doesn't have wine, and drinks water or another beverage, one need not bless upon them, since they are considered as having come on account of the meal, since one doesn't eat without drinking. And even wine needs no blessing before it, except that it is significant enough that a blessing was established for it, but water or other beverages are not significant beverages and do not require a blessing” (שו"ע אר"ח קע"ד).

In other words: one need not make any blessings over beverages while one is eating amidst a meal, as the drinking of the beverage is interwoven with the consumption of the meal.

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! לחיים!