



Pshats for Shots

פרשת יתרו תש"פ | Yitro 2020 | ISSUE 16

Yitro's Meal with Moshe

In this week's parashah, we read of Moshe's father-in-law, Yitro, coming to check on his son-in-law, bring him his wife and sons, as well as to catch up with each other. It's a really lovely model for the relationship between a father-in-law and son-in-law. Following Yitro's excitement of hearing

about all the great things going on for Moshe and his people, we read the following (Ex. 18.12): "וַיֵּקֶחַ יִתְרוֹ ׀ חֵתָן מֹשֶׁה עִלָּה וְזִבְחִים לְאֱלֹהִים וַיָּבֵא אֶהָרֹן וְכָל ׀ זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְאָכֹל-לֶחֶם עִם- And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and sacrifices for God; and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to partake of the meal before God with Moses' father-in-law."



where's the drinking?

Rabbi Obadiah ben Jacob Sforno (1475-1550) suggests that the reason they came together to eat was to "לשמח עמו על שנכנס תחת כנפי שכינה" to rejoice with him upon his entering under the wings of the Divine Presence", while Rabbi Moses ben

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While the second part of the verse seems to be connected to the first part, as many commentators suggest that the offerings were then consumed, why does the verse say that they ate? Also,

Drinking on the Daf

For those keeping up with the Daf Yomi cycle, there are a few discussions of drinking this past week (*Berakhot* 37-43):

- Rav Asi said one is not permitted to make beer from *terumah* dates (38a)
- *Beraita* that if one drank any beverage, but not water, one could get bad breath and possibly throat inflammation (40a)
- In a *beraita*, Rabbi Meir suggests that the tree of knowledge between good and evil was grapes, since wine brings wailing upon people (40a)
- Rav Huna and Rabbi Yohanan dispute whether *birkat shehakol* works for bread & wine or not (40b)
- Wine requires a blessing for itself (41b-42a)
- There is A LOT of discussion concerning wine (42b-43a)
- A *beraita* about blessing order of wine and oil (43b)



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/>



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Nahman (1194-1270) suggests that it was "ביום הווא חתן דמים הוא חתן דמים כי חתן דמים הוא חתן דמים" on the day of his wedding, because he was a groom of blood."

The lack of any mention of drinking, however, is peculiar. Why is drinking not mentioned? There could be any number of reasons, although it could be similar to what we saw in *Parashat Hayeri Sarah* (see *Pshats for Shots* issue #5), that the drinking could have been intended, or could have been brought out later in the festivities.

Although there may be many reasons out there, an interesting midrash says "הרי הכתוב מתמיה אדם שהיה עובד ומזבח ומקטר ומנסך ומשתחוה לעבודה זרה שלו, עכשיו הוא מביא עולה וזבחים Scripture registers wonder here: A man who had worshipped idolatry and who had poured libations and bowed down to idolatry, now brings a burnt-offering and sacrifices to God!" (*Mekhilta d'Rabbi Yishmael* 18:12).

A curious possibility could have been that Yitro was giving up on libating wine and, thus, did not offer up any wine. And since they consumed what Yitro had offered for sacrifices, they only focused on eating. Open to other possibilities....

Drinking Halakhah of the Week

With just a few weeks to go until Purim, it's time to get serious about this special day on the Jewish calendar!



While there may have been a practice of celebrating a festive Purim meal at night (see the story of Rav Ashi on *Megillah 7b*), the early fourth-century rabbi Rava said "סעודת פורים שאכלה בלילה לא יצא ידי חובתו" One who ate a Purim meal at nighttime has not fulfilled one's obligation" (*Megillah 7b*).

This eventually is codified by Rabbi Yosef Karo in his *Shulhan Arukh*, although that doesn't mean that one *can't* have a festive meal at the nighttime of Purim, as Rabbi Moshe Isserles (1530-1572) comments thereupon (שו"ע 695.1): "ומכל מקום גם בלילה ישמח וירבה קצת בסעודה" Nevertheless, even at nighttime, one should rejoice and slightly increase one's festive meal".

While the main eating and drinking celebrations are to take place during the daytime of Purim, kicking things off the night of Purim are also a great way to get into the spirit of the day!



New Podcast/Video Episode 🎧🎥



Drinking in Hasidic Thought featuring Rabbi Eli Simpson

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

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