

- “You shall make its dishes, its spoons, its shelving-tubes, and its pillars, with which it shall be covered; of pure gold shall you make them.” (Rabbi Nosson Scherman (ArtsScroll))
- “For [the table] make bread forms, incense bowls, and side frames, as well as the half tubes that will serve as dividers [between the loaves of bread]. All these shall be made of pure gold.” (Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan (*The Living Torah*))

However, the language so clearly seems to point towards tools for libating that other contemporary English translations reflect this understanding:

- “And thou shalt make the dishes thereof, and the pans thereof, and the jars thereof, and the bowls thereof, wherewith to pour out; of pure gold shalt thou make them.” (Rabbi JH Hertz (Soncino))
- “Make its bowls, ladles, jars and jugs with which to offer libations; make them of pure gold.” (NJPS)
- “You must also make, out of pure gold, its bowls, spoons, pitchers, and jars for pouring libations.” (Rabbi Jonathan Sacks (Koren))

In this set of understandings, it seems that God is establishing that, before one can pour/libate, one needs the appropriate vessels to do so.

Either way, whether these utensils are intended for libations, as it would seem, or for the showbread table where they are mentioned, they are definitely meant to be made of pure gold. If they are, indeed, meant for pouring wine for God, however, golden wine-pouring vessels are certainly a stylish and fancy way to provide wine for God. Perhaps this could inspire us, since we are made in God’s image, to use well-appointed vessels for our drinking.

This approach is very similar to Hanukkah in that even though one can use various methods of lighting a menorah, since the miracle was achieved through the use of olive oil, there is a special meaning to be carried out through the use of olive oil. So, too, with Purim, since the miracle took place through Esther’s deployment of wine, causing Haman’s downfall, thereby preventing the annihilation of the Jewish people, so, too, we should drink wine to commemorate our having been saved from destruction.

One beverage that gets shockingly little attention in the works of these rabbis is whiskey. These centuries saw the rise of whiskey-production and whiskey-consumption, certainly amongst the Jewish people. It may be that these aforementioned rabbis made it a specific point to privilege wine, as they saw the increase in whiskey-consumption, general, as well as on Purim, in particular. In fact, Rabbi Yechiel Michel Epstein (1829–1908) wrote in his *Arukh HaShulhan* (OH 695:5) that whiskey causes vomiting, so he even sought to provide a reason to avoid whiskey.

However, since these rabbis advocated quite highly for wine, even though there is no absolute requirement of drinking wine on Purim, perhaps another way of perceiving the story is that it wasn’t so much wine-drinking that caused the Jewish people to be safe, but simply drinking. And since the Jewish people were saved through drinking parties, it’s ultimately more important that drinking and being felicitously enjoyed, than necessarily what specific beverage(s) is to be enjoyed. Either way, wishing you a joyous Purim!



Purim Episodes

As we are in Adar and Purim is just around the corner, this week’s episode of *The Jewish Drinking Show* features Professor Richard Sarason sharing about *Massekhet Purim*, an amusing 18th century Talmudic parody on Purim.

This coming week’s episode features Rabbi David Fried, as we discuss 18th and 19th century rabbis on Purim-drinking (אחרונים), following-up from last year’s episode on 16th and 17th century rabbis on Purim-drinking (אחרונים), which, in turn, follows-up from the previous year’s episode on Medieval rabbis on Purim-drinking (ראשונים).

If you are interested in checking-out Purim episodes from previous years, you can visit JewishDrinking.com/Purim, which also features further Purim resources.



The Jewish Drinking Show is available on YouTube, as well as wherever you listen to podcasts

