

ONEG SHABBAS

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Wine for the Poor?

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Even in the central most chapter of the Torah, wine is to be found. Well, to be more exact, the opportunity to produce wine. Leviticus chapter 19 is not only fantastically filled with many meaningful mitzvot, but also occurs in the middle of the Torah, as it is flanked by the two sections on sexual morality, it seems as if it is being pointed to like the middle part of a sandwich. As the heading for this section, “You shall be holy” (Lev. 19:2), indicates, these mitzvot point us towards being a holy people. Why not also have wine?

Actually, it’s not just about having wine, it’s also about allowing others to have wine, as we read (Lev. 19:10):

וְכַרְמְךָ לֹא תַעֲוֹלֵל
וּפְרֵט כְּרַמְךָ לֹא תִלְקֵט
לְעַנְי וְלְגֵר תַּעֲזֹב אֹתָם
אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:

You shall not *t’ollel* your vineyard;
You shall not gather the *peret* of your vineyard;
You shall abandon them for the poor and for the stranger;
I am The LORD, your God.

Before we can make sense of this verse, what are these words in relation to the vineyards? The rabbis see the need to define these obscure terms, identifying *peret* as “grapes which fall down during the harvesting” (mPeah 7:3), and the verb *תַּעֲוֹלֵל* as having something to do with a noun, *עללת*, which they identify as



With Passover now in our rearview mirror, you may have used up a lot of wines and might be looking to restock your wine supply. If you need a discount on wines, go to JewishDrinking.com and click on the KosherWine.com discount logo and you get \$15 off orders of \$200 or more.

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“Any [cluster] which has neither a shoulder [a wide upper part] nor a pendant [a cone-shaped lower part]” (mPeah 7:4), so not to pluck such clusters. (In fact, most of chapter 7 of mPeah seeks to provide parameters for the performance of this verse.)

Since this chapter deals largely in ethical behaviors, this verse becomes a very central one in the way we consider vineyards with regards to others. It seems that leaving grapes for the poor and the stranger are more than simply nice things to do for them.

While grapes can certainly be eaten as fruits on their own, let’s be honest: grapes’ ultimate use is for wine. Since wine typically fetches sums of money, this verse points towards enabling the poor and the stranger access to wine in a fair and equitable fashion. However, it is not handing out wine to the poor, rather, they are to harvest these less than optimal grapes, then haul them back home, and then ferment them into wine.

One of the most fascinating aspects of this harvesting is that, even for the owner, it lessens the burden of having to pick every single last grape, so they can focus on the bulk of their grapes, while allowing the poor and the stranger to gather what they can from the remainder.

One further aspect of this verse is the punctuation at the end that “I, The LORD, am your God”, which frequently occurs in this chapter. This seems to signify that God is there to make things right. As it is stated in the midrash and rebroadcast by Rashi, “I am the Judge Who is certain to punish if necessary and Who for the neglect of these duties will exact from you nothing less than your souls” (*Sifra, Kedoshim* 3:7).

This verse communicates that even the poor shall have wine, although in a manner that they feel enabled through their hard work to achieve it.

Oneg Shabbas is a project of Jewish Drinking, Inc., a 501(c)3 initiative to educate about drinking in Jewish wisdom, tradition, history, practice, and more in order to enrich people's lives. This publication is composed by, edited by, and published by Rabbi Drew Kaplan. If you have any comments, compliments, or suggestions, he can be reached at Drew@JewishDrinking.com

The Jewish Drinking Show

Newest Episode

As we approach the 90th anniversary of the passing of the 21st amendment repealing prohibition, this moment in time offers us the opportunity to inquire as to Jews and Prohibition. While an early episode of *The Jewish Drinking Show* discussed Jews and Prohibition, as well as an episode last spring on an aspect of Orthodox responses, the newest episode of the show focusses on Reform responses to Prohibition, as it was kind of contentious how to go about adhering to both American law and Jewish law.

Based off of his research while in rabbinical school, first-time guest Rabbi Zachary Goodman, shares his findings for this episode. The episode, in both video and podcast format, is available on YouTube, as well as wherever you listen to podcasts at JewishDrinking.com/ReformProhibition.



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[YouTube.com/@JewishDrinking](https://www.youtube.com/@JewishDrinking)

Upcoming Episodes

May 2 – Prof. Jordan Finkin – Yiddish Drinking Terms

May 9 - Yossi Francus - Scotches

May 16 - Prof. Sacha Stern - Compulsive Libationers in the Talmud?

Wine Wednesday Events



Building on recent Texts-and-Tasting Events in Cincinnati led by Rabbi Drew in February and March, Jewish Drinking is now holding a series of three monthly Israeli wine-tastings, taking place in April, May, and June.

This past Wednesday was the kickoff for this miniseries of Israeli wine-tastings, featuring four wines produced by Yaakov Oryah. As it took place in the waning moments of *Yom Ha'Atzma'ut*, it was a wonderful way to close out *Yom Ha'Atzma'ut*, as we drank wines from Israel and discuss Israeli wine history. If you're interested in

viewing our reviews of the wines, you can do so at JewishDrinking.com/OryahWinesTasting.

We still have two further events in this mini-series, taking place in May and June. While there is no admission fee for these events, the suggested minimum donation of \$18 can be made to [PayPal.me/JewishDrinking](https://www.paypal.me/JewishDrinking).

May's event will be taking place this coming Wednesday at 8pm at a private residence in Amberley Village (on Laurel Oak Lane), as we explore celebrating holidays. If you have any questions or suggestions, please reach out to Rabbi Drew Kaplan at Drew@JewishDrinking.com.



If you are, or know of someone, who struggles with alcohol abuse, alcoholism, or other substance abuse, there are resources out there to help, which are available at JewishDrinking.com/AlcoholAbuse