

# ONEG SHABBAS

THE UNOFFICIAL PARASHAH SHEET FOR KIDDUSH CLUBS

פרשת שלח - Vol. 2, Iss. 15 - 16-17 June 2023 - כ"ח סיון תשפ"ג

## Fruit to Get Excited About

Rabbi Drew Kaplan

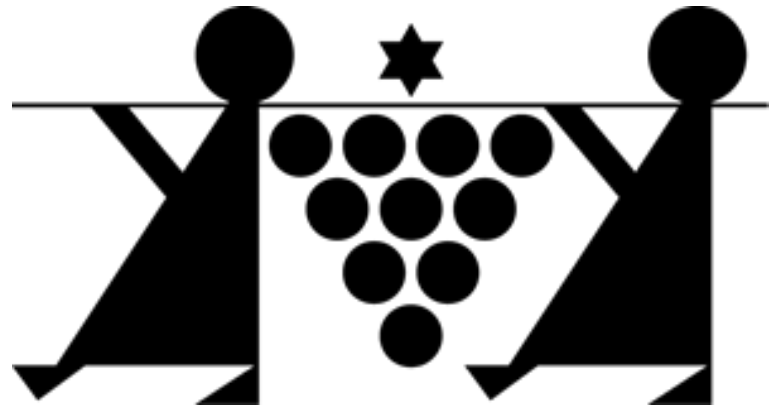
Of all of the times to visit Israel to scope it out, the one time of year that the children of Israel go to scout it out happens to be "ימי בכורי ענבים" the days of the first ripe grapes" (Num. 13:20). As to when this was, Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhaki (1040-1105), also known as Rashi, wrote that it was "ימים שהענבים מתבשלין בבכור" the days when the grapes were ripening at its early stage of growth." Thus, it was in the summer, perhaps late July-early August. To be in Israel at this time of year means it is pretty warm.

A fuller description of this time of year is that of Rabbi Ovadia ben Jacob Sforno (1470-1550), who wrote, "ולא היו הפירות שנשתבחה בהם בשלמותם עדיין מכל מקום בטח משה רבינו שגודל הפירות the fruit for which the land is famous had not even fully ripened as yet as it was still early in the season. Even so, what they would see would be enough to convince them of the excellence of the land."

As setting up the timing of the scouting of the fruits, they nevertheless are impressed by how plentiful and bountiful the fruits are, as we read, "וַיָּבֹאוּ עַד-נַחַל אֶשְׁכּוֹל וַיִּכְרְתוּ מִשָּׁם זֶמְרָה וְאֶשְׁכּוֹל וַיָּבֹאוּ עַד-נְבִים אֶחָד וַיִּשְׁאַהוּ בְמֹט בְּשֵׁנִים וּמִן-הַתְּאֵנִים They reached the wadi Eshcol, and there they cut down a branch with a single cluster of grapes—it had to be borne on a carrying frame by two of them—and some pomegranates and figs" (Num. 13:23).

It is quite curious that despite it seeming quite simply that this massive cluster of grapes required a pole to be carried by two of the scouts, the rabbis discuss the possibilities that there may have been a multiplicity of poles and scouts: "מִמְשַׁמֵּעַ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר 'בֵּינֵי שְׁנַיִם מוֹטוֹת' בְּשֵׁנֵי מוֹטוֹת From the fact that it is stated 'on a pole' do I not know that it was carried by two people? What is the meaning when the verse states: 'Between two?' on two poles" (Sotah 34a). In case you thought that that seems to be a lot of people, another rabbi suggests even more: "אָמַר רַבִּי יִצְחָק: טוֹרְטְנֵי, וְטוֹרְטְנֵי דְטוֹרְטְנֵי, הָאֵל כִּי־צִדָּה? שְׁמַנְהָ נֶשְׂאוּ אֶשְׁכּוֹל, אֶחָד נֶשֶׂא רִימוֹן, וְאֶחָד נֶשֶׂא תְּאֵינָה. יְהוֹשֻׁעַ וְכָלֵב לֹא נֶשְׂאוּ כָּלֹם Rabbi Yitzhak (135-170 CE) said: "Scales and scales of scales. How so? Eight of the spies carried the cluster, one of them carried a pomegranate, and one carried a fig. Joshua and Caleb did not carry anything" (Sotah 34a).

However many poles and however many scouts carried those poles, how did they hang them on the pole(s)? Rashi wrote, "שֹׁכֵת, אֶשְׁכּוֹל שֶׁל עֵבֶבִים תְּלוּ בָּהּ a vine branch with a cluster of grapes



hanging from it (not as the text might suggest, that they cut a branch and they cut also a cluster of grapes)." In explaining this description, Rabbi Shabbetai ben Joseph Bass (1641-1718) wrote in his *Siftey Hachamim*, "כאילו ענביה א', לא זמורה לחוד ואשכול לחוד, דא"כ למה כרתו הזמורה כלל אשכול ענביה א', לא זמורה לחוד ואשכול לחוד, דא"כ למה כרתו הזמורה כלל [The meaning is] as if Scripture had written 'from there they cut off a branch with one cluster of grapes' rather than interpreting [that they cut off] 'a branch' by itself and a 'cluster' by itself; for, if so, why would they have cut off the branch at all, since it had no fruit."

Ultimately, no matter how they carried this bunch of grapes, they certainly found it to be a surprisingly bountiful bunch and were clearly very excited about this bounty of grapes.

While grapes are certainly edible, grapes were and are treasured for their wine-making possibilities.

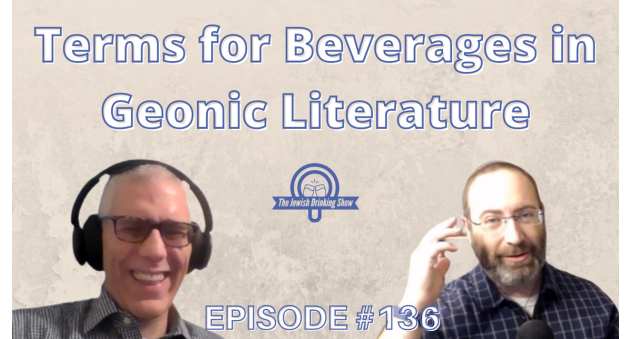
I do not believe that readers of this publication will merely see the featured produce that the scouts bring back as simply a coincidence. Rather, readers of this publication should appreciate that the produce of the land that the scouts are very excited about are connected with the production of wine. In fact, having such a bountiful raw harvest of produce seemingly would yield the ability to produce massive amounts of wine. In turn, this means that this land has such an incredible ability for yielding bountifully flowing amounts of wine to provide joyous consumption to the people. This is certainly an exciting possibility to enter into our land to know that it will have such a wondrous capacity for massive amounts of wine. Certainly, it is a fitting land for the children of Israel. L'chaim

# The Jewish Drinking Show

## Newest Episode

The newest episode of *The Jewish Drinking Show* features Rabbi Dr. Phil Lieberman. Having previously published an episode concerning Geonic literature, for the 136th episode of *The Jewish Drinking Show*, we take a step back and consider terms for beverages in literature of the Geonic rabbis. Rabbi Dr. Lieberman is a social, economic, and legal historian of the Jews of the medieval Islamic world.

He is Associate Professor of Jewish Studies and Law, Associate Professor and Chair of Classical and Mediterranean Studies, Associate Professor of Religious Studies, and Affiliated Associate Professor of Islamic Studies and History, at Vanderbilt University. His 2014 book, *The Business of Identity: Jews, Muslims, and Economic Life in Medieval Egypt* (Stanford University Press) was a finalist for the National Jewish Book Award. Phil also serves the US Navy Reserve as a chaplain. While the full episode is available on YouTube, as well as wherever you listen to podcasts, you can check out the episode at [JewishDrinking.com/GeonicTerms](https://JewishDrinking.com/GeonicTerms). You can also check out a clip on "The Term *Nabidh* in *Halakhot Gedolot* at [JewishDrinking.com/GeonicNabidh](https://JewishDrinking.com/GeonicNabidh).



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



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## June Episodes

June 13 – Prof. Phil Lieberman – Wine in Geonic Literature  
June 20 – Prof. Claudia Bergmann – Drinking in the World to Come in Second Temple Literature?

## Wine Wednesday Events

Building on recent Texts-and-Tasting Events in Cincinnati led by Rabbi Drew in February and March, Jewish Drinking has now held monthly wine-tastings, taking place in April and May, followed by a summer series for June, July, and August.

This miniseries of wine-tastings has featured and will continue to feature wines supplied to JewishDrinking for review purposes. May's event featured a discussion on how drinking should play a part in elevating one's experience on Jewish holidays, exploring not only Talmudic texts, but writings by Maimonides, Rabbi Yosef Karo, and more.

For our June event, Rabbi Drew will be leading a text-based discussion on "קידוש במקום סעודה kiddush at the location of the meal". Accompanying our discussion will be a sampling Israeli wines provided for review purposes from [KosherWine.com](https://KosherWine.com), as well as innovative beers from Israel.



This event will be taking place this Wednesday (June 21st at 8pm at a private residence in Cincinnati (in Amberley Village)).

While there is no admission fee for these events, the suggested minimum donation of \$18 can be made to [PayPal.me/JewishDrinking](https://PayPal.me/JewishDrinking).

If you have any questions or suggestions, please reach out to Rabbi Drew Kaplan at [Drew@JewishDrinking.com](mailto: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](https://JewishDrinking.com/AlcoholAbuse)