



# ONEG SHABBAS



## THE UNOFFICIAL PARASHAH SHEET FOR KIDDUSH CLUBS

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### Wine in War Rabbi Drew Kaplan

One of the wonderful gifts that God will provide us upon our entry into the land of Israel when our ancestors were to conquer it would be "ערים גדולות וטבת אשר לא־בנית ובהים מלאים כל־טוב אשר לא־מלאת וברת חצובים אשר לא־נטעת great and flourishing cities that you did not build, houses full of all good things that you did not fill, hewn cisterns that you did not hew, vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant" (Deut. 6:10-11). This is certainly an incredible blessing, receiving all of these projects that require so much energy, time, and effort yet would already be provided. In real estate terms, we would call these turnkey properties.

While that is certainly the case for these houses and the cisterns, it would seem to be a bonus to receive these vineyards and olive groves, which have already taken years to grow and are ready for our ancestors' consumption. Of course, for readers of this publication, we all know what vineyards are used for: the production of wine. While that in and of itself would be a wonderful blessing, there's still, of course, the work to be done to transition the products of these vineyards into actual wine.

While of the Talmud discusses the permissibility of food within the houses as having been available for consumption at that time (Hullin 17a), Rabbi Moses ben Maimon (1138-1204), also known as Maimonides, understands the wide-ranging permissibility of such food and wine in situations of Jewish warfare:

When the army's troops enter the territory of gentiles, conquering them and taking them captive, they are permitted to eat meat from animals that died without being ritually slaughtered or which were trefe, and the flesh of pigs and and similar animals, if they become

חלוצי צבא כשיכנסו בגבול העכו"ם ויכבשום וישבו מהן. מותר להן לאכל נבלות וטרפות ובשר חזיר וכיוצא בו אם ירעב ולא מצא מה יאכל אלא מאכלות אלו האסורים.

hungry and can only find these forbidden foods. Similarly, they may drink idolatrously-libated wine. This license is derived by the Oral Tradition which interprets Deuteronomy 6:10-11: "God... will give you... houses filled with all the good things" as "pigs' necks and the like". (Mishneh Torah, Kings and Wars 8:1)

וכן שנתה ו"ן נסך. מפי השמועה עה למדו ובהים מלאי מכל טוב ערפי חזירי מ וכיוצא בהן וכן שנתה ו"ן נסך. מפי השמועה עה למדו ובהים מלאי מכל טוב ערפי חזירי מ וכיוצא בהן

This is certainly fascinating not only for the food consumption aspect but also that he specifically permitted the drinking of idolatrously-libated wine. Not everybody was happy with his permissibility of drinking such an idolatrously-libated wine.

Commenting on Torah portion, Rabbi Moses, son of Nahman (1194-1270), also acronymically known as Ramban, wrote, advocating for not consuming such wine nor anything else involved in idolatrous worship:

Thus all forbidden articles were permitted to them except [for those that were forbidden as a result of] the prohibition of idols, as he will yet clarify, "thou shalt not covet the silver or the gold that is on them, nor take it unto thee etc." (Deut. 7:25). Therefore, he mentions here in the next section, "you shall break down their altars" (Deut. 7:5) - to destroy the idols and their appurtenances. But whatever else was found in the Land was permissible. This permission lasted until they consumed the spoil of their enemies. And some Rabbis say that this permission applied [only] to the seven years of [the] conquest [of the Land]. (רמב"ן על דברים ו:)

והנה הותרו להן כל האיסורין זולתי אסור ע"ז כמו שיבאר עוד (דברים ז:כ"ה) לא תחמוד כסף וזהב עליהם ולקחת לך וגו' ולכן יזכר כאן בפרשה שאחרי כן (דברים ז:ה) מזבחותיהם תתצו וגו' לאבד ע"ז ומשמשיה ושאר כל הנמצא בארץ מותר והיה ההיתר הזה עד שאכלו שלל אויביהם ויש אומרים בשבע שבכשו

So, as you can imagine, he is not happy with what Maimonides wrote, as he continues, specifically referring to what Maimonides wrote:

But what Maimonides wrote is not correct. For it is neither because of danger to life nor of hunger, alone, in time of war that [forbidden foods] were made permissible; rather, after they captured the large and wealthy cities and settled in them, was the spoil of their enemies permitted to them. And not to all armed soldiers [in any war throughout does this law apply as Maimonides wrote], but only to [those who conquered] the Land which He swore to [give to] our forefathers, as is explained in the subject before us. [Maimonides' ruling that the dispensation applies to] idolatrously-libated wine is also incorrect, for all forbidden articles pertaining to idolatry – the idols themselves, their appurtenances, and their offerings – are all forbidden as it is said, "thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt utterly abhor it, for it is a doomed thing" (Deut. 7:26). And if Maimonides' intent was to permit in wartime only non-libated gentile wine, why do we need a Scriptural interpretation for this? If Scriptural prohibitions were permitted [to them], could subjects of a Rabbinic decree be forbidden?! (רמב"ן על דברים ו:)

ואין זה נכון שלא בשביל פקוח נפש או רעבון בלבד הותר בשעת מלחמה אלא לאחר שכבשו הערים הגדולות והטובות וישבו בהן היתר להם שלל אויביהם ולא בכל חלוצי צבא אלא בארץ אשר נשבע לאבותינו לתת לנו כמו שמפורש בענין וכן יין נסך שהזכיר אינו אמת שבכל איסורי ע"ז היא עצמה ומשמשיה ותקרובת שלה הכל אסור שנאמר (דברים ז:כ"ו) שקץ תשקצנו ותעב תתעבנו כי חרם הוא ואם לא נתכוון הרב אלא להיתר סתם יין במלחמה וכי למה הוצרכנו לדבר זה איסורי תורה הותרו גזרות של דבריהם יהיו אסורות

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Ramban was clearly not happy with Maimonides' suggestion concerning the permissibility of drinking idolatrously-libated wine in the course of conquering. Rather, he found Maimonides' suggestion on this matter to be a shocking overreach.

Seeking to try to make Maimonides' words make sense for all involved, Rabbi Yosef Karo (1488-1575) wrote:

Maimonides opines that this is specifically in a situation where no permissible foods are available, then it is permissible at that moment, but if there is permissible foods in front of one at that moment, then one should not abandon the permissible food in favor of the forbidden food (כסף משנה, הלכות מלכים ומלחמות ח:א, ד"ה חלוצי צבא) איסורא למישבק היתרא ולמיכל אב לא אי שכיח קמיה היתרא לית ליה היכא דלא שכיח ליה סובר רבינו היינו דוקא

While Rabbi Karo clearly is striving to create a way to read Maimonides as not providing problematic consumption with regards to the idolatrously-involved foods and/or beverages, it is no easy feat.

Clearly, it remains a matter of rabbinic dispute, but, it would seem that, in times of war, while סתם יינם (non-libated gentile-owned wine) would be permissible to drink, there remains a huge debate as to whether it would be permissible to drink יין נסך (idolatrously-libated wine) or not.

L'chaim!

## Finding One's Mate in a Vineyard

With Tisha b'Av in our rearview mirror, the next significant Jewish calendrical date is that of Tu b'Av, the 15th of Av. The first text we have on this date is as follows:

Rabban Shimon, son of Gamaliel (2nd century CE), said: "There were no days as joyous for the Jewish people as the fifteenth of Av and as Yom Kippur, as on them the daughters of Jerusalem would go out in borrowed white clothes, so as not to embarrass one who did not have such garments, all of which required immersion. And the daughters of Jerusalem would go out and dance in the vineyards..." (mTa'anit 4:8).

אמר רבן שמעון בן גמליאל, לא היו ימים טובים לישראל כחמשה עשר באב וכיום הכפורים, שבהן בנות ירושלים יוצאות בכלי לבן שאולין, שלא לביש את מי שאין לו. כל הכלים טעונין טבילה. ובנות ירושלים יוצאות וחולות בכרמים

As we seldom encounter texts in the Mishnah concerning mating/paring/dating or anywhere else in rabbinic literature really, this description certainly stands out. Surely, one aspect that is apparent is the wistful view of Rabban Shimon, son of Gamaliel, who shares that this took place long ago, prior to the destruction of the Temple, which he may not have experienced, but his father did. It is not clear if his father met his mother this way or not, but it was likely something his father shared with him that he, in turn, is sharing in the second century of the common era about how good life was - even mating life - prior to the sad destruction of the Temple, thus serving as a fitting literary juxtaposition to the previous descriptions concerning Tisha b'Av before it in the Mishnah (mTa'anit 4:6-7).

There are many questions that emerge from this text: Why was it only the daughters of Jerusalem? Why did they dance? Why on these two specific dates? Why did this activity take place in vineyards? One question we need not ask is why was this activity done in the first place? That should be quite obvious: concern about young Jews and young Jewesses finding each other is an incredibly important one.

As to why it was only the daughters of Jerusalem, it may have been that they had a critical mass, bigger than any other town or village throughout Israel pre-destruction of the Temple. As to why they danced, perhaps that is not only something the males of our species appreciate, but maybe also it was a great way to have fun with their

## Wine Wednesday Events

When we encounter discussions of drunkenness in popular literature we often come across the line that the Bible either forbids or otherwise looks down upon drunkenness. Is that really the case?

Join Rabbi Drew of Jewish Drinking this coming **Wednesday, August 2nd at 8pm** in Cincinnati for a text-and-tasting pairing where we not only explore biblical texts on drunkenness, but also some early Rabbinic texts, as well.

As part of the Wine Wednesdays miniseries, we will be enjoying wines from Israel, as well as a couple of fascinating beers from Israel.

While there is no fee for admission, the suggested minimum donation for this

event is \$18 to Jewish Drinking, a registered 501(c)3. Donations can be made at either [JewishDrinking.com/Donate](http://JewishDrinking.com/Donate), [PayPal.me/JewishDrinking](https://www.paypal.com/US/m0/charity/JewishDrinking), or simply making a check out to Jewish Drinking.



For more information on the event, visit [bit.ly/aug23ww](http://bit.ly/aug23ww)

friends. As to why it took place in the vineyards, perhaps it provided a semblance of privacy, but also importantly shade amidst the heat.

But why these two dates? These are two strikingly different dates, with Yom Kippur being filled not only with a variety of ways of withholding physical pleasure, including fasting, but also a prohibition against labor, while Tu b'Av has none of these

restrictions. The rabbis of the Talmud are similarly perplexed, as they can easily figure out what is special about Yom Kippur, but what is special about the 15th of Av, numerous amoraic sages assert different possibilities (Ta'anit 30b-31a). Yet, who is to say that they are two separate reasons? Perhaps these two dates are connected.

One way of connecting these two dates is to specifically to do with the vineyards, themselves. As discussed on episode 71 of *The Jewish Drinking Show*, "The Wine Festival in the Dead Sea Scrolls", the late summer and early fall was the time of year for harvesting grapes in Israel in the Second Temple period (and to this day) ([JewishDrinking.com/DSSFestival](http://JewishDrinking.com/DSSFestival)). It very may well have been despite the exact opposite normative nature of these two dates, they are connected as the beginning and the concluding of the grape harvest season.

Indeed, perceived in this way, these Jerusalem mating dances then become a way of formally kicking off grape harvest season, as well as celebratorily concluding the season. What, then, is the connection between wine and love? Well, for that, one need not read far into the book of Song of Songs to yield that wine and love are two of the most delightful experiences in life (SOS 1:2).

L'chaim to love!



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](http://JewishDrinking.com/AlcoholAbuse)