

# ONEG SHABBAS

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## Sukkot is for Enjoying

Rabbi Drew Kaplan

When we think about holidays, we often think about the joy aspect. What we don't necessarily consider is that this joy aspect originates from the Torah's description of our relating to the specific holiday of Sukkot. The specific verses regarding joy during Sukkot are the following (Deut. 16:13-15):

After the ingathering from your threshing floor and your winepress, you shall hold the Feast of Booths for seven days. You shall rejoice in your festival, with your son and daughter, your male and female slave, the [family of the] Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow in your communities. You shall hold a festival for The LORD, your God, seven days, in the place that The LORD will choose; for The LORD, your God, will bless all your crops and all your undertakings, and you shall have nothing but joy.

חג הסוכות תעשה לך שבועת ימים באספך מגרנה ומיקרבך: ושמחת בחגך אתה ובנך ובתך ועבדך ואמתך והלוי והגר והיתום והאלמנה אשר בשעריך: שבועת ימים תחג לה' אלקיך במקום אשר יבחר ה' כן יברכה ה' אלקיך בכל תבואתך ובכל מעשה ידיך והיית אר שמה



Thus it turns out that this holiday is the only one specifically described as incorporating an element of joyousness. While we can extrapolate this sense of happiness and joy to other holidays, we also should not lose sight that this holiday is explicitly characterized by joy, seemingly due to our having finished the

harvest. As anyone who has completed a project, you know how much of a relief it is to have finished and be done with it. Add into this feeling the physical aspect of a harvest and one can feel extra relieved.

Considering these verses, our sages sought to specify how the seeking out of joy is to be accomplished, resulting in - what else? - drinking (*Pesahim* 109a):

The Sages taught:

A man is obligated to gladden his children and the members of his household on a festival, as it is stated: "And you shall rejoice on your Festival" (Deut. 16:14).

With what should one make them rejoice?

With wine.

Rabbi Yehudah says: "Men with what is fit for them and women with what is fit for them."

תנו רבנן:

חייב אדם לשמח בניו ובני ביתו ברגל שנאמר ושמחת בחגך במה משמחם? בין רבי יהודה אומר אנשים בראוי להם ונשים בראוי להן

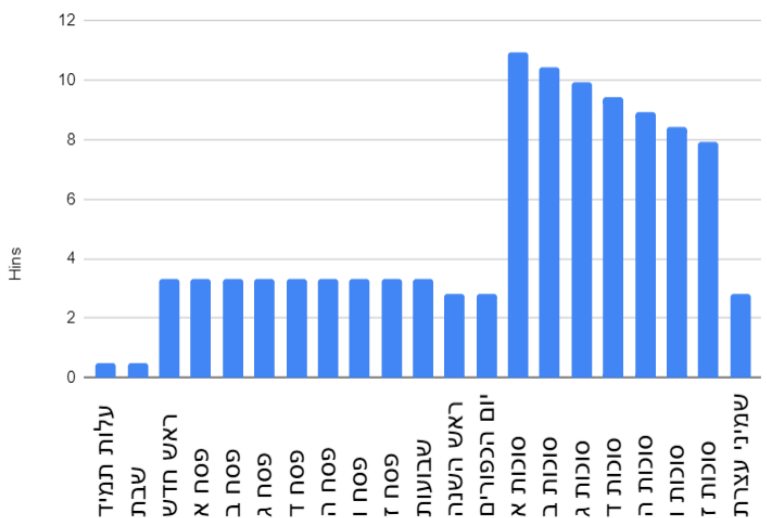
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## Lots of Libations on Sukkot

Rabbi Drew Kaplan

While in this space, when we talk about Jewish drinking, we usually discuss human consumption. And while we are definitely thinking about human consumption on this holiday (see column to the left), another drinking aspect that stands out is that of Divine consumption. As it turns out, Sukkot is the holiday where we are to provide the most amount of libations to God contrasted against any other time of the year. And it's not even close.

Libations (according to Numbers 28-29)



Whereas with most holidays the total amount of wine we are to libate to God on any given day is usually within the range of 2.8333 hins (Rosh HaShanah, Yom Kippur, and Shemini Atzeret) and 3.333 hins (Shavuot, each day of Pesah, and Rosh Hodesh), the smallest amount of hins we are to libate is about 8 hins on the final day of Sukkot. When we consider that a *hin* is about a gallon and a half, this is a lot of wine to libate to God!

While on a daily basis, the amount on any given day of Sukkot far surpasses any other single day outside of the holiday of Sukkot regarding volume of wine to libate to God, which would be sufficient enough to consider it already as being strikingly unique, when we begin to consider how much the total amount is to be libated to God during this time, it is an absolutely staggering amount.

In fact, when we add up how much is to be libated to God during these seven days, it totals up to be over 100 gallons of wine to be provided to God. When one considers that a non-holiday month of 29 days would typically demand more than 26.5 gallons of wine, that means the amount of wine libated during these seven days is more than five and a half non-holiday months. Thus, there is about as much wine libated during the week of Sukkot as there is leading up to the holiday of Passover (sure, Shemini Atzeret has a bunch, but it basically works out). Ultimately, during the holiday of Sukkot, wine is meant to flow 🍷🍷🍷

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. Jewish Drinking appreciates your support, whether moral, intellectual, or simply sharing this content with your friends. Looking to support it further? Feel free to make your tax-deductible donations at [JewishDrinking.com/Donate](https://JewishDrinking.com/Donate).

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As we see from this Talmudic text, the paradigmatic expression of joy to be accomplished on the festival of Sukkot - as well as other festivals - is that of wine-drinking. And even though Rabbi Yehudah disagrees with this blanket suggestion of wine, perhaps indicating wine is not everyone's interest and that there may be a gender difference occurring with wine, I imagine readers of this publication greatly appreciate that this text is part of our tradition.

Moreover, this fulfillment of rejoicing on holidays as being accomplished through wine-drinking was ratified, as it was included in subsequent halakic works, such as Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah* (הלכות שבייתת ויום טוב) and Rabbi Yosef Karo's *Shulhan Arukh* (OH 529:1). Indeed, Maimonides specifies that this wine-drinking on festivals fulfills a mitzvah, as he describes (מצוות, מצוות עשה נ"ד):

Included in the ways of "You shall rejoice on your festival" are to rejoice upon them with joyful activities such as eating meat, drinking wine, wearing new clothes, distributing fruits, and a variety of sweets to children and women, as well as playing with musical instruments and dancing only in the Temple, which is at the water-drawing house. All of this fits into what they said about "You shall rejoice in your festival". What they obligated from them more than any of the others is wine-drinking specifically, since it is more uniquely associated with joy.

ובכלל אמרו ושמת בחגך מה שאמרו גם כן לשמח במימי שמחה וזמה לאכול בשר ולשתות יין ולבדש בגדים חדשים ולחלק מיני פירות ומיני מתיקה לקטנים ולנשים. לשחוק בכל ניגון ולרקד במקדש לבד והיא שמחת בית השואבה, זה כולו נכנס באמרו ושמת בחגך. ומה שיתחייב מהם יותר שתיית היין לבד, כי הוא יותר מיוחד בשמחה

Thus, having a great time through drinking on holidays - Sukkot, especially - is not only a great way of enjoying them, it seems to be a fundamental aspect of them.

L'chaim 🍷

## The Jewish Drinking Show

The newest episode of *The Jewish Drinking Show* published this week



focuses on a very timely matter, the holiday of Sukkot. Recorded during last month's Texts-and-Tasting event, the episode focuses on Drinking In/Out of Sukkot, as Rabbi Drew leads a texts-based discussion on does one need to drink within a sukkah or not, as well as does one need to bless upon drinking in the sukkah?

The episode is available at [JewishDrinking.com/SukkotDrinking](http://JewishDrinking.com/SukkotDrinking).

This episode builds off of one of the earliest episodes published four years ago as an introduction to drinking during the holiday of Sukkot which is available at [JewishDrinking.com/DrinkingOnSukkot](http://JewishDrinking.com/DrinkingOnSukkot).

blessing upon consuming a grain-based baked food item, perhaps if there were a grains-based baked food item on the table, should we wait to eat that item to make that blessing?

Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (1910-1995), a noted rabbinic sage of the past century, however, would bless לישב בסוכה prior to the blessing over the wine, knowing that he would be consuming a grains-based baked food item (הליכות שלמה ט', הערה פ"ה), so clearly that is an option.

L'chaim 🍷

## Texts-and-Tasting Events

Jewish Drinking's monthly Texts-and-Tasting events in Cincinnati continue. September's Text-and-Tasting event was our fifth and final Wine Wednesday event, as we explored Drinking In/Out of Sukkot, along with a few wines and even a flavorful gin from Israel. For those interested in the tasting notes video on the wines, it is available at [JewishDrinking.com/Sept2023Tasting](http://JewishDrinking.com/Sept2023Tasting). In a first from our series, the recording from the event was published as an episode of *The Jewish Drinking Show* (see below).



photo courtesy of Eric Schwartzberg

Having completed our Wine Wednesdays, we return to spirits for our October and November events. Our October event, "Scotch in the Sukkah" will be taking place at 8pm this upcoming Wednesday, on October 4th at a private residence, featuring a texts-based discussion on Drinking in the Book of Ecclesiastes (קהלת). Our November event, "Mezcal & Mourning", will take place at 8pm on November 9th at a separate private residence.

These events are a way to convivially gather while exploring texts in our tradition concerning drinking matters, deepening our knowledge of Jewish drinking topics. Men and women are both welcome to attend. While there is no charge to attend, these events are a great opportunity to consider donating to Jewish Drinking, with minimum suggested donations of \$18 welcome. Should you have any questions regarding any of these events and/or are interested in sponsoring them, please reach out to Rabbi Drew Kaplan at [Drew@JewishDrinking.com](mailto:Drew@JewishDrinking.com).

## Havdallah in the Sukkah?

A question this time of year is "Does one have to do do havdallah in a sukkah?" This is certainly a good Jewish drinking question. As discussed in this week's episode of *The Jewish Drinking Show* (see left), once one has a set drinking session, especially when drinking enough wine for havdallah, that might necessitate drinking within a sukkah (but certainly a matter of rabbinic debate).

While it had not been mandated by the *Shulhan Arukh*, nor had it been discussed much before the the 19th century, Rabbi Yisrael Meir ha-Kohen Kagan (1838-1933) argued that הבדלה מדביל בסוכה שכן "One makes havdallah in the sukkah, since we make havdallah year-round in our house" (*Mishnah Berurah* 639:30). As such, it is certainly a fitting drinking activity to take place in the sukkah.

Once we're making havdallah in the sukkah, the next question concerns the blessing of לישב בסוכה - do we say it? If we say it, when do we say it? While we typically bless this

