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The First Libation Command

Rabbi Drew Kaplan

While the first libation to God recorded in the Torah is when Jacob pours a libation to God at Beth-El (Gen. 35:14), God does not command any libations until...you guessed it - this week's Torah portion! This very first divine command to offer wine to Him occurs within the procedure for offerings (Ex. 29:38-42), accompanying the lambs we are commanded to sacrifice to God, both in the morning and in the evening, with a quarter-hin of wine for each lamb (Ex. 29:40-41):

There shall be a tenth of a measure of choice flour with a quarter of a *hin* of beaten oil mixed in, and a libation of a quarter *hin* of wine for one lamb; and you shall offer the other lamb at twilight, repeating with it the meal offering of the morning with its libation—an offering by fire for a pleasing odor to The LORD

ועשרן סלית בלול
בשמן כתיית רבע ההין
ונסך רביעת ההין יין
לכבש האחד: (מא)
ואת הכבש השני
תעשה בין הערבים
כמנחת הבקר
וכנסכה תעשה ליה
לריח ניחח אשה לה'

While this was meant for the inauguration of the tabernacle, it was also meant to serve as "עלת לדרתיכם a regular burnt offering throughout the generations" (Ex. 29:42). This is no small amount of wine. Indeed, in contemporary measurements, this yields nearly two bottles of wine.

For an insightful explanation of this libation, Rabbi Avraham, son of Maimonides (1186-1237) wrote (אברהם בן הרמב"ם על שמות כ"ט:מ'): (ר' אברהם בן הרמב"ם על שמות כ"ט:מ')

The wine that is thrown on top of the altar with the sacrifice is called *nesekh* because it is a drink offering on its own and its offering is not the same as the (offering) of the oil, which is a liquid, [it is not] an

היין שזורקים אותו על גבי המזבח עם הקרבן; נקרא נסך מפני שהוא קרב משקה בפני עצמו ואין הקרבתו כהקרבת השמן שאע"פ שהוא משקה [אינו] קרב

offering on its own, but mixed with finely sifted flour and, for this reason, the wine is called *nesekh* because it is poured on the sides of the altar in a spilling manner to baste it as the oil would baste what is poured in it...

בפני עצמו אלא מעורב בסולת ומפני זה נקרא היין נסך מפני שהוא נשפך על צדדי המזבח בשפיכה להטפוח אותו כמו שטיפוח השמן את מה שיוסך בו....

For Rabbi Avraham, son of Maimonides, he argues that the wine libation is not merely just a complementary part of the other items being offered, but an offering on its own. He also describes the difference of the oil versus the wine in terms of their roles with regard to the daily offering, identifying the oil as being part of an offering with the fine flour, versus the wine, which is a libation offering on its own.

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When to Drink on Purim?

Rabbi Drew Kaplan

As Purim approaches in a few weeks, one matter concerns when one is supposed to eat and drink in celebration of the festival. We read in the book of Esther that Purim is characterized as "ימי משתה ושמחה" Days of drinking and celebration" (Est. 9:22), so we know that drinking is certainly a component of the day.

Talmudic Timing

The guidance we read of in the Talmud concerning the timing of one's celebratory Purim meal is the following (*Megillah* 7b):

Rava said: "One who eats the Purim meal at night has not fulfilled his obligation."
אמר רבא: סעודת פורים שאכלה בלילה – לא יצא ידי חובתו

According to Rava (280 – 352 CE), there seems to be an assumption that one is enjoying a festive meal on Purim night, but that one should also enjoy another festive Purim meal during the daytime, owing to Purim

being described as days of drinking and rejoicing.

The assumption that one enjoys the Purim celebratory meal at night is evidenced in this story that occurred at the turn of the fifth century CE, which illustrates some ambiguity around this question, even after Rava made his statement (*Megillah* 7b (MS Munich 95)):

Rav Ashi was sitting before Rav Kahana and it grew dark, but the rabbis had not come. He said to him, "Why have the rabbis not come?"
א"ל מאי טעמא לא קאתו רבנן א"ל דילמ' טרחו בסעודת פורים

He said to him, "Does the master not opine that of Rava's, as Rava said, 'One who eats the Purim meal at night has not fulfilled his obligation. What is the reason? "Days of drinking and celebration"?"

א"ל לא הוה אפשר למיכלה באורמא א"ל ולא סבר לה מר להא דרבא דאמי רבא סעודת פורים שאכלה בלילה לא יצא ידי חובתו מאי טעמא ימי משתה ושמחה

He said to him, "Rava said that?"
He said to him, "Yes."

א"ל אמ' רבא הכי א"ל אין

He repeated it 40 times and it became as if it rested in his pocket.

תנא מיניה ארבעין זימנין ודמיא ליה כמאן דמנח ליה בכיסתיה

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Purim Katan (14 Adar I) [Encore Presentation]

With *erev Shabbat* being 14 Adar I (“Purim Katan”) and *Shabbat* being 15 Adar I (“Shushan Purim Katan”), what expectations are there concerning our celebration or commemoration of this day(s)? Although we had published the following essay on the topic last week, owing to the relevance of the day being now, it is worth it for people to see/read even in this encore presentation.

Curious as it is, how do we celebrate the 14th of Adar I? In leap years, such as this year, when we get a bonus Adar, are we supposed to do anything for what would otherwise be Purim? It might seem that it is not necessarily a day to do anything special, yet we read in the Mishnah (*Megillah* 1:4):

The only difference between the first Adar and the second Adar is the reading of the *Megillah* and gifts to the poor.

אין בין אָדָר
הָרֵאשׁוֹן לְאָדָר
הַשֵּׁנִי אֵלָא
קְרִיאַת הַמִּגִּלָּה
וּמִתְּנוּת
לְאֲבוּנִים

It would seem from this Mishnah that,

despite the 14th day of Adar II eclipsing it as the day upon which we should be celebrating Purim, perhaps the 14th day of the first Adar retains something special. Indeed, we read that fasting and eulogizing are forbidden on 14 Adar I (*Megillah* 6b), so it would seem that it is not merely a normal day.

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{1st Libation Commandment continued from previous page}

As to the specialness of wine, Rabbi Yitzhak ben Judah Abarbanel (1437–1508) wrote on what the wine uniquely brings to this daily offering (אברבנאל על שמות כ"ט:מ):

...He commanded that wine be poured upon it as a remembrance of its joy (the reception of the Torah) because "wine makes human hearts happy" (Ps. 104:15) and commanded that it be a quarter of a *hin* because it is the amount that will be enough to enjoy, yet not approach getting drunk.

...צוה שינסך
עליה יין לזכרון
שמחתה כי היין
ישמח לבב אנוש.
וצוה שהיה
רביעית היין כי
הוא הכמות
שיספיק לשמוח
ולא יגיע לשכר

What Rabbi Abarbanel adds here is speaking to what wine uniquely brings to the offering, although what is curious is that, while he is correct in that wine makes human hearts happy, it is actually meant not for human consumption, but rather meant for the Divine.

However, perhaps he means that, just as wine makes human hearts happy (Ps. 104:15), and humans are created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27), then the wine that God commands to be libated to Him is in order for Him to enjoy and become happy through it, yet not so much that He gets drunk via this wine.

While I would be hard pressed to advocate drinking both in the morning and in the evening, as God commands Himself to be poured, nevertheless, there is certainly a fascinating wisdom to drinking wine with one's meals to elevate one's life experience. Indeed, as one kosher vintner commented on one of Jewish Drinking's videos this week, "Every lunch and every dinner (but not breakfast) should be a drinking party. Those who don't drink wine every day are not only missing out on one of the great joys of life, but also are just missing the boat." While I only ever drink at lunch on *Shabbat* and I do not drink everyday, I cannot claim to achieve this aspiration. However, his words do remind me of God commanding twice-daily wine with His meals. Certainly, we should strive to elevate our lives through joy.



L'chaim 

{Purim timing continued from previous page}

While Rav Kahana (led the Pumbedita academy from 395 until 412 CE) clearly expected the opportunity to study with his fellow rabbis on Purim day, it was through the sharing of Rav Ashi (352–427 CE) with him the innovative teaching of Rava innovative teaching from the previous century that one only fulfills one's Purim-drinking and eating requirement during the daytime. It would seem that Rav Kahana assumed that everyone would be drinking at nighttime, but available during the day, but had not yet encountered Rava's teaching on this matter, only to be informed by his student, Rav Ashi, concerning this matter. This innovation to also celebrate during the daytime of Purim seems to have spread slowly throughout the rabbinic networks, but ultimately made it so that there would be day-drinking on Purim.

Medieval Opinions

In his *Beit Yosef* (“Joseph’s House”), Rabbi Yosef Karo (1488–1575) rounds up a variety of Medieval considerations, beginning with the following (בית יוסף, אורח חיים תרצ"ה:ב):

Rabbi Mordekhai ben Hillel HaKohen (1250–1298) wrote, quoting Rabbi Eliezer ben Yoel HaLevi of Bonn (1140–1225) that one needs to celebrate the night and the day similarly regarding reading the *megillah*, but the writer is baffled with his words.

כתב המרדכי
בשם ראב"ה
שצריך לנהוג ליל
(שבת) ויומו
דומיא דקריאה
והמחבר תמה
עליו

This is certainly an interesting interaction, as Rabbi Eliezer ben Yoel HaLevi of Bonn advocates celebrating both evening and daytime of Purim, which would neatly reflect both the story in the Talmud, as well as Rava's statement. However, Rabbi Mordekhai ben Hillel HaKohen was not happy with this equivalence of both nighttime and daytime celebrating of Purim. Continuing in this vein, Rabbi Karo quotes the following (*ibid.*):

Rabbi Asher ben Yehiel (1250–1327) wrote that they were accustomed to not eat meat at Purim night, in order not to cause people to be confused and think that that meal was the main Purim celebratory meal.

כתב ה"ר אשר יש
שנהגו שלא לאכול
בשר בלילה ההוא
כדי שלא יטעו
ויחשבו שהיא
סעודת פורים

From this quote, Rabbi Asher ben Yehiel celebrated Purim at nighttime and daytime, yet differentiated the celebration by going meatless for the night of Purim in order to ensure that people knew that the daytime meal would be the main celebratory aspect. However, what is fascinating is that it is not stated that the daytime meal is the main Purim celebratory meal, just that one has not fully fulfilled one's obligation to celebrate Purim without a daytime celebration.

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{Purim timing from previous page}



While all of these commentators agree that one is to have a Purim celebratory meal during the day, although the nighttime is questionable, another matter that arises is when during the day it should take place (ibid.):

Rabbi Israel Isserlin (1390-1460) wrote in his <i>Terumat HaDeshen</i> that most of the Jewish world celebrate their main Purim meal in the evening and continue until the nighttime, with most of the meal taking place in the nighttime. And he provided a reason for doing so. Nevertheless, he wrote that he and his rabbis held their main Purim celebratory meal during the morning.	כתוב בתרומת הדשן שנהגו רוב העולם לעשות עיקר סעודת פורים בערבית ונמשכים בה עד הלילה ורוב הסעודה היא בלילה ונתן טעם לדבר ומ"מ כתב שהוא ורבותיו נהגו לעשות עיקר הסעודה בשחרית
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While he does not quote the reasons for doing so, it may seem to be that the common practice in the 15th century was to hold their Purim celebrating during the afternoon and on in to the evening and night was because that was when it was more normal to drink rather than daytime drinking, although perhaps Rabbi Isserlin and his rabbinic teachers wanted to make sure they got most of their drinking in while it was still actually Purim.

A contemporary of Rabbi Karo, Rabbi Moses Isserles (1530-1572) mentioned another fifteenth century rabbi, who discussed the earlier question, concerning the nighttime celebrating (אורח חיים) (תרכ"ה:ב):

And from a responsum of Rabbi Yaakov ben Yehudah Weil (1390-1453), it is inferable that there is an obligation to rejoice also on Purim night.	ובתשובת מהרי"ב משמע דגם בלילה חייב לשמוח
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This seems to accord with what Rabbi Karo quoted of Rabbi Eliezer ben Yoel HaLevi of Bonn.

The Set Table

In his famous work, Set Table, Rabbi Karo mentions with brevity the matter of timing (שולחן ערוך, אורח חיים תרכ"ה:א):

One who does the Purim meal at night does not fulfill his obligation.	סעודת פורים שנעשה בלילה לא יצא ידי חובתו
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In this paraphrasing of Rava, he both ratifies Rava's innovation, as well as allowing the nighttime celebration, although not speaking directly to when during the daytime one should festively celebrate Purim.

Adding to this is Rabbi Isserles, who softly paraphrases his previous mention of Rabbi Weil (הגה לשולחן ערוך, אורח חיים תרכ"ה:א):

Nevertheless, one should be happy and add more during his meal even at night ((Rabbi Yaakov ben Yehudah Weil (1390-1453) <i>Responsa Mahariv</i>).	הגה ומ"מ גם בלילה ישמח וירבה קצת בסעודה (תשו' מהרי"ו)
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In adding this comment, Rabbi Isserles seems to be making sure that readers don't think that it would be inappropriate to also celebrate during Purim night, but rather supply them with the support that their celebrating is very much appropriate to the day.

Later Consideration

In the late 19th century, Rabbi Yehiel Mikhel HaLevi Epstein (1829-1908) wrote, regarding the timing (אורח חיים תרכ"ה:א):

One has fulfilled one's duty by eating one meal during the day of Purim, while one need not add on to one's nighttime meal. And the nighttime meal that one ate on the 14th or on the night of the 15th, one has not fully fulfilled one's obligation with it, as it is written, "Days of drinking" - days and not nights. Nevertheless, one should rejoice also at nighttime and increase one's meal a bit after hearing the megillah. And even if it occurred on Saturday night, when one is satiated from Shabbat, nevertheless, it is appropriate to rejoice a bit with their meal.	ובסעודה אחת ביום - יצא ידי חובתו, ובלילה אינו צריך להרבות בסעודה. וסעודת פורים שאכל בלילה, בין ליל ארבעה עשר בין ליל חמישה עשר - לא יצא ידי חובתו, דכתיב: "ימי משתה" - ימים ולא לילות. ומכל מקום גם בלילה ישמח, וירבה קצת בסעודה לאחר המגילה. ואפילו חל במוצאי שבת, שהוא שבע משבת, מכל מקום נכון לשמח בקצת סעודה.
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In this writing, Rabbi Epstein also ratifies the appropriateness of daytime Purim drinking, while saying that one does not fully fulfill the obligation of celebrating Purim with nighttime drinking. Yet, just like Rabbi Isserles, encourages nighttime drinking on Purim (and even nighttime drinking on Shushan Purim). This seems to be the consensus, which yields enjoying day-drinking on Purim day, in addition to living it up also at nighttime.

Conclusion

While there is certainly a requirement dating back to Rava's articulation of the need to enjoy oneself through day-drinking on Purim day, there seems to be an implicit assumption that one will also celebrate Purim at nighttime, as well. However, inasmuch as the nighttime drinking is taken for granted, that should not be understood as belittling this nighttime drinking. Moreover, there have been rabbis who sought to clarify that the nighttime drinking that will likely occur as part of one's celebrating and enjoying Purim is not only great, but should not be understood as the *only* celebrating of enjoying and drinking on Purim. There are also rabbis who were concerned about those whose main celebrating and drinking actually occurs on the night following Purim - Shushan Purim - which, while acceptable, one should really strive to enjoy their enjoying of Purim *actually* on Purim day, rather than the subsequent night following Purim. Of course, drinking on Shushan Purim is entirely acceptable, especially since the Biblical verse states that they are "days of drinking and celebrating", but one should not lose sight of making sure they actually drink on Purim day, itself.

L'chaim 🍷

{Purim Katan, continued from page 2}

Medieval Rabbis

In the medieval era, there were rabbis who understood 14 Adar I as a day upon which to celebrate, while others were unsure of the need to do so. Indeed, Rabbi Ya'akov ben Asher (1270-1340) quoted Rabbi Yitzhak ben Jacob Alfasi (1013-1103) as having written that "one needs to increase one's meal on the 14th of Adar 1, but that one does not need to increase one's meal on the 15th of Adar 1" (טור, אורח חיים תרצ"א:א), although Rabbi Ya'akov ben Asher is not entirely keen on the need to do so.

Similarly, the Tosafistic authors reported that *יש שנוהגין לעשות ימי משתה* "there are some that are accustomed to making days of drinking-parties and joy on the fourteenth and fifteenth of the first Adar", although was uncomfortable seeing that as the halakha, concluding that *להחמיר לעשות משתה ושמחה* and the halakha, concluding that "the law (halakha) is that there is no need to be stringent to make drinking-parties and joy in the first Adar" (ד"ה ורבי) (אליעזר ברבי יוסי).

In addition to quoting this Tosafistic approach, Rabbi Yosef Karo (1488-1575) quoted further rabbis (בית יוסף, אורח חיים תרצ"א:א):

Rabbi Meir HaKohen (end of the 13th century) wrote [in his] *Hagahot Maimonit*, quoting Rabbi Yitzhak ben Yoseph of Corbeil (d. 1280)'s *Sefer Mitzvot Katan*, "That throughout the world, people are generally accustomed to making drinking-parties nor merriment only on 14 Adar I, even though people are accustomed to making merriment and drinking-parties on both 14 and 15 Adar II. And the reason is on account of the Talmudic statement that there is no difference between 14 of Adar...and it doesn't mention 15 Adar I."

והגהות מיימונית
כתבו בשם סמ"ק
שהעולם לא נהגו
לעשות משתה
ושמחה כי אם
בי"ד שבאדר
הראשון אע"פ
שבאדר השני
נהגו גם בט"ו
שמחה ומשתה
וטעמא משום
דאמר תלמודא
אין בין י"ד
שבאדר הראשון
וכו' ולא הזכיר
ט"ו

Writing in the 16th century, however, Rabbi Karo then concludes *ועכשיו* "But now, we are accustomed to increase our feasting on neither the 14th, nor 15th of the first Adar." Indeed, he does not even mention anything about celebrating this day in his famed work, *Shulhan Arukh*. However, thereupon Rabbi Moses Isserles (1530-1572) does, indeed, mention this possibility (רמ"א על שולחן ערוך, אורח חיים תרצ"א:א):

There are those who say that one is obligated to increase in drinking and joy on the 14th of Adar I (Rabbi Ya'akov ben Asher (1270-1340) quoting Rabbi Yitzhak ben Jacob Alfasi (1013-1103)).
But, we are not accustomed this way. Nevertheless, one should increase their feasting slightly, in order to fulfill the opinion of those who are stringent (Rabbi Meir HaKohen (end of the 13th century) quoting Rabbi Yitzhak ben Yoseph of Corbeil (d. 1280)).
And "the good-hearted has a continual drinking-party" (Prov. 15:15).

י"א שחייב
להרבות במשתה
ושמחה בי"ד
שבאדר ראשון
(טור בשם
הר"ף)
ואין נוהגין כן
מ"מ ירבה קצת
בסעודה כדי
לצאת ידי
המחמירים
(הג"מ בשם
סמ"ק)
וטוב לב משתה
תמיד

In commenting subsequently, Rabbi David HaLevi Segal (1586-1667) wrote (טורי זהב על שולחן ערוך אורח חיים תרצ"ב:ב, ד"ה מ"מ ירבה קצת בסעודה) (כו):

Purim Katan Resources



Although hopefully the essay found in this issue of *Oneg Shabbas* on the topic of Purim is helpful in your pursuit of knowledge of this curious celebration on the Jewish calendar, in case you are curious to discover more, you may want to watch and/or listen to the newest episode of *The Jewish Drinking Show* on this topic. It is available on YouTube, Apple Podcasts,

Spotify, or wherever else you listen to podcasts, it can be found at [JewishDrinking.com/PurimKatanEpisode](https://www.jewishdrinking.com/PurimKatanEpisode). Moreover, a few video clips from the episode are available on social media channels.

In addition to material from the newest episode of *The Jewish Drinking Show*, Jewish Drinking is excited to share a central page of resources on Purim Katan, which is at [JewishDrinking.com/PurimKatan](https://www.jewishdrinking.com/PurimKatan).

Rabbi Shimson ben Zadak (d. 1312) wrote that one should increase (Tashbetz Commentary §178), and Rabbi Yehiel of Paris (d. 1268) was accustomed to increase and to invite people, according to the straightforward understanding of the Mishnah: "The only difference between Adar I and Adar II is the reading of the megillah and gifts to the poor" (*Megillah* 1:4). And it is brilliant how Rabbi Moses Isserles (1530-1572) concludes here: "And a good-minded person always enjoys drinking-parties."

מ"מ ירבה קצת
בסעודה כו'.
בהג"ה תשב"ץ סי'
קע"ח כ' דיש
להרבות ורבינו
יחיאל מפרי"ש
גיל להרבות
ולהזמין בני אדם
כמשמעות לשון
המשנה אין בין
אדר כו' ושפיר
מסיים רמ"א כאן
וטוב לב משתה
תמיד

Later on, Rabbi Yisrael Meir HaKohen Kagan (1838-1933) largely quotes Rabbi Segal, then concludes with (משנה ברורה תרצ"ז:ה):

"And a good-minded person is continually enjoying drinking-parties" is that it is good to increase one's drinking-parties out of honor of the miracle that occurred during these times.

וטוב לב משתה
תמיד היינו שטוב
להרבות לכבוד
הנס שנעשה
בעתים הללו

Conclusion

While there were many medieval rabbis who saw the words of the Mishnah as indicating that one either should enjoy oneself through drinking parties on 14 Adar I, or perhaps even requiring that it is necessary to do so, there were also other rabbis who were uncomfortable requiring this celebration. Although Rabbi Karo and Rabbi Isserles observed in their communities in the 16th century that such practices had fallen into disuse on 14 Adar I, subsequent rabbis were supportive of those who want to celebrate this date. Ultimately, no rabbi ever wrote that it was inappropriate. As we are about to encounter 14 Adar I this upcoming Thursday night and Friday, hopefully, this will get us into the mindset to celebrate 😊

L'chaim 🍷

This publication is composed by, edited by, and published by Rabbi Drew Kaplan.

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