

# ONEG SHABBAS

THE UNOFFICIAL PARASHAH SHEET FOR KIDDUSH CLUBS

סוכות - Vol. 3, Iss. 52 18-19 October 2024 - י"ז תשרי תשפ"ה

Oneg Shabbas explores drinking in the weekly Torah portion, along with timely essays on drinking in Jewish life

## 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.

הַיְסָכְתָּ תַעֲשֶׂה לָךְ  
שִׁבְעַת יָמִים בְּאַסְפֶּךָ  
מִגֶּרְךָ וּמִיִּקְרְךָ:  
וְשִׂמְחָתָּ בַּחֲגֹךָ אִתָּהּ  
וּבִנְךָ וּבִתְּךָ וְעַבְדְּךָ  
וְאִמְתְּךָ וְהַלְוִי וְהַגֵּר  
וְהִיתָם וְהָאֱלֵמָנָה  
אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ: שִׁבְעַת  
יָמִים תַּחֲלֶה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ  
בַּמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר-יִבְחָר ה'  
כִּי יִבְרַכְךָ ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ  
בְּכָל תְּבוּאָתְךָ וּבְכָל  
מַעֲשֶׂה יָדֶיךָ וְהָיִיתָ אֶרֶץ  
שְׂמֵחָה



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 (Pesachim 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

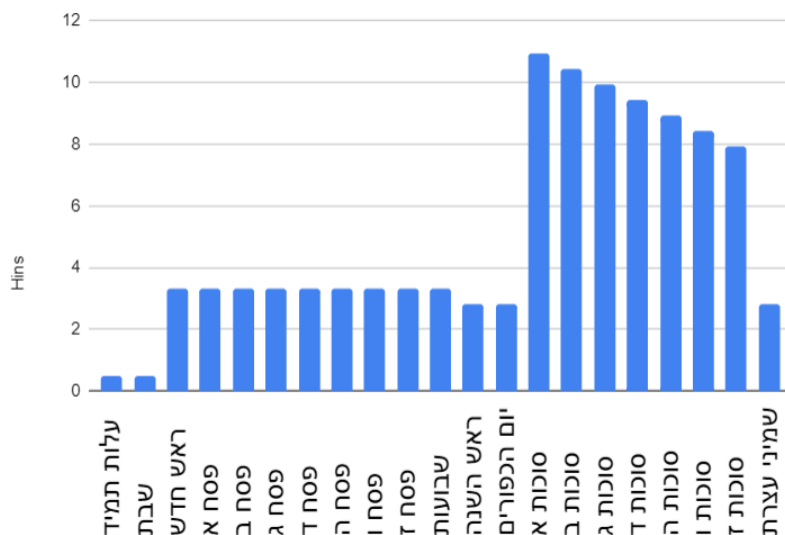
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## Lots of Libations on Sukkot

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 Pessah, 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 🍷🍷🍷

L'chaim 🍷

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An archive of all issues is available at JewishDrinking.com/Parashah-Sheets

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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 halakhic works, such as Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah* (הלכות שביתת יום טוב) and Rabbi Yosef Karo's *Shulhan Arukh* (OH 529:1). Indeed, Maimonides (1138-1204) specifies that this wine-drinking on festivals fulfills a mitzvah, as he describes (ספר המצוות, 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 ושמחת בחגך מה שאמרו גם כן לשמוח בהם במיני שמחה ומזה לאכול בשר ולשתות יין וללבוש בגדים חדשים ולחלק מיני פירות ומיני מתיקה לקטנים ולנשים. ולשחוק בכל ניגון ולרקד במקדש לבד והיא שמחת בית השואבה, זה כולו נכנס באמרו ושמחת 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 🍷

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 (הערה פ"ה), so clearly that is an option.

L'chaim 🍷

## Ecclesiastes During Sukkot *The Jewish Drinking Show*

One of the widespread customs of the holiday of Sukkot is that of reading the biblical book of Ecclesiastes. While rabbis have offered different reasons throughout the ages for why this book became associated with the holiday of Sukkot, including pessimistic reasons, it could also be seen as part of appreciating the joyous aspects of the holiday.

Indeed, Rabbi Mordechai Yaffe (1530-1612) wrote that we read Koheles on Sukkot "because it is the season of our rejoicing and Kohelet urges people to rejoice in their portion and not run after increased wealth. A person who enjoys what he has, it is a gift from God" in his *Levush* (Orah Hayyim 663:2)

וטעמא משום דסוכות הוא זמן שמחתינו וספר קהלת משבח ומזרח את הבריות שישמחו בלחמם ולא ירדפו אחר רבוי הממון והנהנה ממה שיש לו מתת אלקים היא

Indeed, multiple times throughout the book, the author encourages one to eat, drink, and be merry, for they are the gift of God - what better time of year to do that than the holiday of Sukkot?



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. Tax-deductible donations made be contributed at [JewishDrinking.com/Donate](http://JewishDrinking.com/Donate)

## 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 episode #142 of *The Jewish Drinking Show* ([JewishDrinking.com/SukkotDrinking](http://JewishDrinking.com/SukkotDrinking)), once one has a set drinking session, especially when drinking enough wine for havdallah, that might necessitate drinking within a sukkah (but it is certainly a matter of rabbinic debate).



While it had not been mandated by the *Shulhan Arukh*, Rabbi David HaLevi Segal (1586-1667) wrote (Taz OH 639:14):

Throughout the year, Havdallah is made within one's house, therefore, one needs to make havdallah within one's sukkah.	הבדלה שכל השנה מבדיל בבית צריך להבדיל בסוכה
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Subsequent to Rabbi Segal, Rabbi Yosef ben Meir Teomim (1727-1792) wrote, albeit less forcefully, that the custom is to make havdallah in the sukkah (Pri Megadim, MZ 639:14). Later on, Rabbi Yisrael Meir ha-Kohen Kagan (1838-1933) argued that הבדלה מבדיל "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 blessing upon consuming a grain-based baked food item, perhaps if there were a grains-based



Last year's episode of *The Jewish Drinking Show* on the holiday of Sukkot is back to being timely for us. Recorded during one of last year'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 five years ago as an introduction to drinking during the holiday of Sukkot which is available at [JewishDrinking.com/DrinkingOnSukkot](http://JewishDrinking.com/DrinkingOnSukkot).