

ONEG SHABBAS

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

Sukkot is for Enjoying

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.

הַסִּכֵּת תַּעֲשֶׂה לָּךְ
שִׁבְעַת יָמִים בְּאַסְפֵּךְ
מִגֶּרְךָ וּמִקִּבְּרֶךָ:
וְשִׂמַּחְתָּ בְּחֹגְךָ אִתָּה
וּבְנֶךָ וּבִתְּךָ וְעַבְדְּךָ
וְאִמָּתְךָ וְהַלְוִי וְהַגֵּר
וְהַיְתוֹם וְהָאֵלֶּמְנָה
אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ: שִׁבְעַת
יָמִים תִּחַל לֵה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ
בַּמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר ה'
כִּי יִבְרַכְךָ ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ
בְּכָל תְּבוּאָתְךָ וּבְכָל
מַעֲשֶׂה יָדֶיךָ וְהָיִיתָ אֶרֶץ
שִׂמְחָה



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

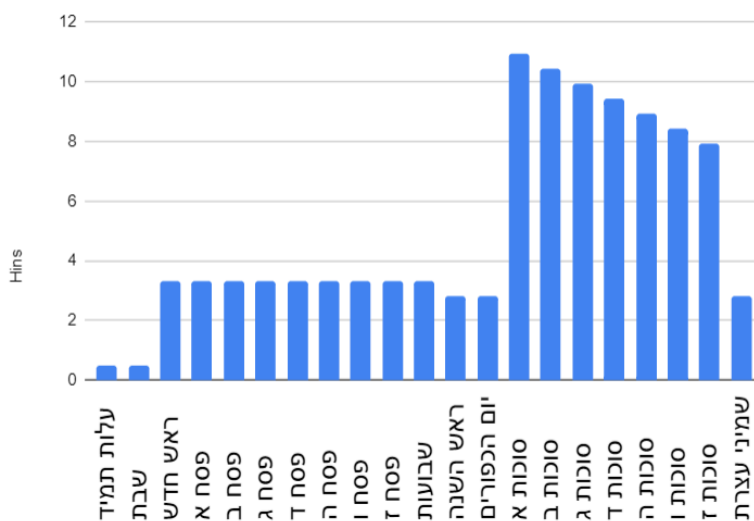
As we see from this Talmudic text, the paradigmatic expression of joy to be accomplished on the festival of Sukkot - as well as other festivals - is that of wine-drinking. And even though Rabbi Yehudah disagrees with this blanket suggestion of wine, perhaps indicating wine is not everyone's

{continued on next page}

Lots of Libations on Sukkot

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. This strikingly massive amount becomes all the much more so when we begin to consider how much the total amount is to be libated to God during this time, yielding 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 around 29.75 gallons of wine, that means the amount of wine libated during these seven days is more than three non-holiday months (see below for a graphic contrasting a regular month vs. Sukkot).

As to where all of this wine is coming from, it may simply be due to this time of year being the wine harvest. This bounty of grapes/wine could have been harvested early on in the season, then begin fermenting, ultimately becoming ready for all of this libating for Sukkot.

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An archive of this publication is available at JewishDrinking.com/Parashah-Sheets

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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 שביית יום טוב) and Rabbi Yosef Caro'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 במיני שמחה ומה 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
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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 🍷

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), 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) wrote similarly to Rabbi Segal (*Mishnah Berurah* 639:30):

One makes havdallah in the sukkah, since we make havdallah year-round in our house	מבדיל בסוכה שכן כל השנה מבדיל בביתו
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As such, it is certainly a fitting drinking activity to take place in the sukkah.

L'chaim 🍷

Related Episodes

A couple of related episodes of *The Jewish Drinking Show* to the holiday of Sukkot are episodes #2 and #142.



Episode #2 is an introductory discussion of "Drinking on Sukkot", while episode #142 is a deeper dive into "Drinking In/Out of Sukkot".



In addition to being on YouTube and podcast players, you can also find these episodes at, respectively,

JewishDrinking.com/DrinkingOnSukkot

&

JewishDrinking.com/SukkotDrinking



{*Lots of Libations on Sukkot*, continued from previous page}

Indeed, as Prof. Jeffrey Rubenstein pointed out:

Since grapes only ripened in August and September, there was little opportunity prior to Sukkot to bring firstfruits of grapes or wine. Peasants were preoccupied with the arduous vintage labors in any case. After the vintage, on Sukkot, when the farmers made their way to Jerusalem for the festival, it was the perfect time to bring a firstfruit offering of new wine as well.

("The Sukkot Wine Libation", in *Ki Baruch Hu: Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Judaic Studies in Honor of Baruch A. Levine*, eds. Robert Chazan, William W. Hallo, & Lawrence H. Schiffman (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1999), 590)

In this way, this way of bringing these first-fruits of grapes would be an excellent way of both providing appreciation to God for such bountiful harvest, as well as a way to celebrate on a national scale all of these grapes, which, as readers of this publication may well know are clearly meant for wine purposes. Moreover, it seems that there was a very joyous atmosphere when coming together during this time, as Prof. Rubenstein also connects the celebration of the water-drawing ceremony that is mentioned in the Mishnah (*Sukkah* 5:1):

They said: "Anyone who never saw the rejoicing of the Drawing House has never seen rejoicing in their lives."	אמרו, כל מי שלא ראה שמחת בית השואבה, לא ראה שמחה מימיו
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About this, he writes (ibid.):

The dancing, singing, joy, and general gaiety that the Mishnah associates with this nocturnal ritual are perfectly understandable as repercussions of rejoicing with wine.

Moreover, he continues:

And the elation at the completed autumn harvest and vintage helps to explain the emphasis on festal joy. But wine, as divine gift, the drink that "gladdens God and men," bears a special association with joy and *simha*. Against this background, the exhortation to be *ak sameah* 'to have nothing but joy' (Deut 16:16) is fully understandable.

May we be inspired to enjoy our bountifulness of wine at this time 🍷 😊

L'chaim 🍷



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