

Kadesh: Happy Hour Begins

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KADESH: Happy Hour begins

Humorous

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Q. "Red, Red, Wine...Stay close to me" – Why Red Wine, Bob?

Sure there is the whole symbolic "looks like blood" thing (Jewish slaves or Paschal Lamb? You make the call) -- but the Ishbitzer Rav gives a novel interpretation: Wine, is the product of a long process (the longer it takes, the more expensive!) From the grape to the bottle, it goes through some long hard processes. So too, the Jewish Nation also requires a long process toward perfection: Egyptian slavery, then the desert, then centuries of exile and persecution. We've been through a lot. But says the Ishbitzer, just like wine, the results will be sweet. This is precisely why we always use wine for all of our holidays, a constant reminder to this idea (and is the reason why if no wine is available on Shabbos, one should make Kiddush on the challah, as bread too is an amazing product of a long hard process) Cheers!

Q: Drinking is for Purim not Pesach?

Don't get bummed if you can't hold your wine. The Avnei Nezer feels that Pesach is a continuation to Purim. When the Talmud (Ta'anit 29a) says "When entering Adar, increase your simcha," Rashi explains that it applies to both months of redemption, Adar and Nissan. This is a good explanation why we celebrate Purim during the second Adar in a leap year: to keep Purim and Pesach next to each other. Therefore, says the Avnei Nezer, the wine is a continuation of the celebration of Purim. But know when to say when, four cups is enough!

Q: Why does Judaism always start meals with wine?

Wine is a drink that lightens the mood and loosens people up (God knows we need all 4 cups especially with all our family on Pesach). Our sages even say that: "There is no simcha, (joyous occasion) without wine." However a fundamental lesson we can take away from Kadesh, is that Judaism believes that part of our goal in life is to find the holiness and spirituality in everything in this world. To sanctify that which is mundane. The word "Kadesh" can also mean to separate. To mikadesh the night with wine is to make this night, and this cup something separate, something special, something unique. Wine is just a regular drink. But by sanctifying wine, we are showing that we can live in the physical world, and enjoy it, while at the same time find holiness into that very same experience. If we use wine in the correct manner and at the correct time, it can provide the physical and spiritual high we all are longing for. L'Chaim.