

# The Ad SheLo Yadah Dilemma: Arur Haman U-Varukh Mordecai

Compiled and Edited by  
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**Foundation For Family Education**

v. 5.2

The following is a "tested" program and is recommended to you for Purim celebration this year. It was created for our colleague Rabbi Judah Kogen of Beth Emet, and I am indebted to him for all of his support and that of his congregants to make a wonderful Sunday morning pre-pre-purim Jewish Family Education program.

1. Prepare dough, fillings, equipment and guide the participants through the easy task of making Hamamntashen: for students of the Religious School, Day School, Hebrew High School or Kadima/USY group, or Jewish Family Education program. While the next phase of the program continues, put the hamantashen in to bake. Recipes for cookie dough are available on-line and I always try to use a pareve dough. If you want an easy way, check with your local bakery and order cookie dough or use a bread machine to turn out a "batch" appropriate to your numbers. Fillings can be made and purchased.
2. Take out as many megillot as can be gathered for purposes of comparison and contrast. For example, the "HaMelekh Megillah" as opposed to the simply Megillah. Check out various sizes, number of lines per yeriah, styles of calligraphy and geographic source of the various Megillot.
3. Using calligraphic markers and a master sheet to provide the form and strokes for each letter in *k'tav ST" M* have the participants work to try and duplicate a line or two from the Megillah - or their Hebrew name. Alternatively, if they have already studied *ST" M* provide portions of the Megillah with wide margins to enable participants to illustrate or illuminate their section.
4. Having cleaned up from the calligraphy and giving each participant their calligraphic marker to take home - and I also use speedball pen points and ink and I explain how they can find these supplies for themselves, we then serve the Hamantashen with the appropriate berakhot. You'll decide whether you'll want to say *shehehiyanu* because it should be 30 days before Purim.

5. As students then return to classes for the remainder of the morning, meet with the parents and teenagers to study and discuss the attached materials that address the issue "Ad Lo Yadah" and the rising problem of alcoholism in the Jewish community, especially among the teens.

# Sources from our Tradition:

- A. R. Aha said: There is the story of a man who kept selling his household goods and drinking up the proceeds in wine. So, saying, "[At this rate] our father will leave nothing for us," his sons plied him with drink, made him drunk, took him out of the city, and left him in a cemetery. Just then, some wine merchants happened to pass the gate of the cemetery. When they heard that in the city there was a roundup for compulsory labor service, they left their loads in the cemetery and went to see what was going on in town. In the meantime, the man woke up from his sleep and, seeing a wineskin above his head, untied it and put its opening to his mouth. Three days later, the man's sons said, "Should we not go see what our father is doing?" They got to the cemetery, found him with the wineskin at his mouth, and said, "Even here your Creator has not forsaken you. Since it is He who provides you with wine, we really don't know what to do about you." So they came to an understanding among themselves that each of them in turn was to provide him daily with wine to drink. [Lev. Rabbah 9:1]
- B. There was a pious man whose father drank much wine, and every time he collapsed in the marketplace, boys would come, pelt him with stones and pebbles, and mock him: "Look at the drunk!" When his pious son saw this, he was so humiliated that he wanted to die. So every day he would say to his father, "Papa, I will send word and have delivered to your own home all the kinds of wine that are sold in this city, just so you won't have to go to the tavern to drink, for you bring shame upon me and upon yourself." Every day he spoke this way once and twice, until finally the father promised him that he would not go to drink in the tavern. Thereafter, every morning and evening, the pious son would prepare food and drink for his father, put him to sleep in his bed, and then leave him. One time, when it was raining, the pious son went out in the marketplace on his way to the synagogue for prayer and saw a drunkard lying in the marketplace. A stream of rainwater was pouring down upon him, and older and younger boys were pelting him with stones and pebbles, and throwing mud at his face, even into his mouth. When the pious son saw this, he said to himself: I will go get Papa, bring him here, and show him this drunkard and the shame children and teenagers heap upon him—perhaps he will learn to restrain his mouth from drinking in taverns and getting drunk. And so he did: he brought him to the marketplace and showed him the drunkard. But what did his old father do? He went over to the drunkard and asked him in what tavern he had drunk the wine that got him so drunk. [Tanhuma, Shemini, #11]
- C. Rava said: On Purim it is a man's duty to mellow himself with wine until he cannot tell the difference between "Cursed be Haman" and "Blessed be Mordecai." [Meg. 7a]
- D. On Purim, R. Yudan the Patriarch sent a joint of meat and a jug of wine to R. Oshaia the Elder, who replied: You fulfilled for us the injunction of "gifts to the poor" [Esther

9:22]. At that R. Yudan sent a whole calf and a huge jar of wine to R. Ohaia who replied, Now you have fulfilled for the injunction of "sending portions, each man to his colleague. [P. Meg. 1:4, 70d]

- E.** Rabbah and R. Zera joined together in a Purim feast. Rabbah became mellow and plied R. Zera with so much drink that he passed out. The next morning, Rabbah besought mercy and revived him.<sup>5</sup> But the following year, when Rabbah said to R. Zera, "Let the master come and we will celebrate Purim together," R. Zera replied, "[Sorry], but one cannot expect a miracle on every occasion." [ B. Meg. 7a] However the Hebrew text of Bialik and Ravnikty has a different tale: Rabbah killed R. Zera.
- F.** Mar the son of Ravina made a marriage feast for his son. When he saw that the sages were getting overly merry, he brought a precious cup worth four hundred zuz and smashed it before them, and they grew serious.
- G.** R. Ashi made a marriage feast for his son. When he saw that the sages were getting overly merry, he brought a cup of white crystal and smashed it before them, and they sobered up. [Ber. 31a]
- H.** "Through three things a man is known", the sages teach "by his pocket, by his cup and by his anger," and the common interpretation of this presents three ways to truly know someone: their attitude to money, philanthropy or frugality, generosity or miserliness ("his pocket"), the extent to which he drinks ("his cup") and the rapidity at which he angers or ceases to be angry ("his anger"). According to this thesis, wine drinking is an important measure of a man, the whole man and at all times. [Tanchuma, Korach, 12]
- I.** "A man who stares at his cup believes himself to be walking on smooth ground" [Prov. 23:31]. When a man lovingly gazes at his cup, the world before him, all of it, appears to be smooth with neither valleys or hills. R. Yohanan said: The ketiv of the text is written "kis" (the wallet) while the keri as it is read is "kos" (cup) imply that even as the drunkard stares at his cup, the wine seller stares at the drunkard's wallet. [Mid. Proverbs 23:29ff; B. Yoma 75a]

# Questions and Guide To Stimulate Discussion on the Theme of Sobriety:

A. R. Aha said:<sup>1</sup> There is the story of a man who kept selling his household goods and drinking up the proceeds in wine. So, saying, "[At this rate] our father will leave nothing for us," his sons plied him with drink, made him drunk,<sup>2</sup> took him out of the city, and left him in a cemetery.<sup>3</sup> Just then, some wine merchants happened to pass the gate of the cemetery. When they heard that in the city there was a roundup for compulsory labor service, they left their loads in the cemetery and went to see what was going on in town. In the meantime, the man woke up from his sleep and, seeing a wineskin above his head,<sup>4</sup> untied it and put its opening to his mouth. Three days later,<sup>5</sup> the man's sons said, "Should we not go see what our father is doing?" They got to the cemetery, found him with the wineskin at his mouth, and said, "Even here your Creator has not forsaken you.<sup>6</sup> Since it is He who provides you with wine, we really don't know what to do about you."<sup>7</sup> So they came to an understanding among themselves that each of them in turn was to provide him daily with wine to drink.<sup>8</sup> [Lev. Rabbah 9:1]

B. There was a pious man<sup>9</sup> whose father drank much wine, and every time he collapsed in the marketplace, boys would come, pelt him with stones and pebbles, and mock him: "Look at the drunk!" When his pious son saw this, he was so humiliated that he wanted to die.<sup>10</sup> So every day he would say to his father, "Papa, I will send word and have delivered to your own home all the kinds of wine that are sold in this city, just so

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<sup>1</sup>Who is R. Aha, when and where did he live such that his teaching reflected his own experiences, for example Palestine/Israel or the Diaspora in Babylonia or Egypt? Does it matter?

<sup>2</sup>They took advantage of his weakness for their own purposes. Was this the only way to bring him to his senses? Were they concerned about any other issue(s) with regard to their father's addiction to wine?

<sup>3</sup>Why a cemetery and was it proper for them to act in order to protect their own inheritance without regard to their father's honor?

<sup>4</sup>What is meant by "above his head"? Were the wineskins hanging from a tree to prevent animals from drinking the wine or was there some other meaning for this act?

<sup>5</sup>Why did they wait three days before checking on their father? Is this a real "ma'aseh that occurred" or is it a literary motif to emphasize a value?

<sup>6</sup>Being unable to explain how their father found wine in great quantity in the cemetery, they concluded that God had provided the wine. Did God do so? How could one argue that He did provide the wine? What do you think about such arguments and proofs.

<sup>7</sup>Now they truly had a dilemma, for is God intended to provide their father with wine, then his alcoholism was not completely his free choice.

<sup>8</sup>What is the difference between their father purchasing his own wine or the brothers in turn purchasing wine for their father?

<sup>9</sup>In what way does this aggada differ from the first?

<sup>10</sup>Who was humiliated - father or son? Is a father obligated to live his life so as not to embarrass his son, or vice versa? Or, are both individuals who can live as they please, neither affecting the public honor of the other? Similarly, is a Jew obligated to live his/her life such that it reflects honor on the Jewish religion and people as in "kiddush Hashem?"

you won't have to go to the tavern to drink, for you bring shame upon me and upon yourself."<sup>11</sup>

Every day he spoke this way once and twice, until finally the father promised him that he would not go to drink in the tavern.<sup>12</sup> Thereafter, every morning and evening, the pious son would prepare food and drink for his father, put him to sleep in his bed, and then leave him.<sup>13</sup> One time, when it was raining, the pious son went out in the marketplace on his way to the synagogue for prayer and saw a drunkard lying in the marketplace. A stream of rainwater was pouring down upon him, and older and younger boys were pelting him with stones and pebbles, and throwing mud at his face, even into his mouth. When the pious son saw this, he said to himself: I will go get Papa, bring him here, and show him this drunkard and the shame children and teenagers heap upon him—perhaps he will learn to restrain his mouth from drinking in taverns and getting drunk.<sup>14</sup> And so he did: he brought him to the marketplace and showed him the drunkard. But what did his old father do? He went over to the drunkard and asked him in what tavern he had drunk the wine that got him so drunk.<sup>15</sup> [Tanhuma, Shemini, #11]

C. Rava<sup>16</sup> said: On Purim it is a man's duty to mellow himself with wine until he cannot tell the difference between "Cursed be Haman" and "Blessed be Mordecai." [Meg. 7a]<sup>17</sup>

D. On Purim, R. Yudan<sup>18</sup> the Patriarch sent a joint of meat and a jug of wine to R. Oshaia

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<sup>11</sup>What bothered the son more: (1) that the father was addicted to wine and drank until completely drunk and senseless; (2) that he drank in public, in the tavern rather than privately; (3) that both suffered embarrassment by public drunkenness?

<sup>12</sup>Why would the son continually have to ask his father to desist from public intoxication? Why wouldn't he have been able to convince his father quickly? Ultimately, why did the father agree to stay at home and receive food and the wine that he craved?

<sup>13</sup>Note the difference between the first two tales: here the son - labeled the "pious" son - not only provides for his father's needs, but he personally checks on him twice a day, including putting him to bed each night.

<sup>14</sup>But hadn't the father already committed himself to refrain from going to the tavern and becoming a public drunk? Why bring the father to see another drunk suffering humiliation at the hands of all, including children?

<sup>15</sup>Does the father learn the lesson intended by the son? Rather, he asks where is such good liquor to be found that can truly make one so drunk and apparently a happy drunken state. This is an "old joke in American humor", apparently 2000 years old. Do you think that it may be a literary motif taken even from previous civilizations - Roman, Greek, Mesopotamian - or is it a Jewish ironic creation?

<sup>16</sup>Is this name of importance? He is the head of a Babylonian academy at Mahuza (d. 352 C.E.). Rava is an abbreviation of R. Abba; his full name was R. Abba b. Joseph b. Hama (Er. 54a). We need to know if it is an off-handed comment or indeed a legal ruling, binding upon Jews to fulfill Purim obligations, because in his debates with Abbaye, except in six specific instances, Rava's opinion is law. And, most interestingly Rava publicly denounced those who were only concerned with their pleasures and appetites and who ate and drank to excess (T Shab. 109a).

<sup>17</sup>f Rava was so opposed to excess in drink, why would he "recommend" that people drink to excess on Purim, to such an extent that they couldn't tell the difference between Haman and Mordecai, between the epitome of evil and the good hero?

<sup>18</sup>This Purim anecdote occurs in Eretz Yisrael, and literally R. Yudan is made to feel that his "Purim gifts" were initially too meager to fulfill the mitzvah as completely as he could. In this case, note that the

the Elder, who replied: You fulfilled for us the injunction of "gifts to the poor" [Esther 9:22]. At that R. Yudan sent a whole calf and a huge jar of wine to R. Ohaia who replied, Now you have fulfilled for the injunction of "sending portions", each man to his colleague. [P. Meg. 1:4, 70d]

- E.** Rabbah<sup>19</sup> and R. Zera joined together in a Purim feast. Rabbah became mellow and plied R. Zera with so much drink that he passed out. The next morning, Rabbah besought mercy and revived him. But the following year, when Rabbah said to R. Zera, "Let the master come and we will celebrate Purim together," R. Zera replied, "[Sorry], but one cannot expect a miracle on every occasion."<sup>20</sup> [B. Meg. 7a] However the Hebrew text of Bialik and Ravnitky has a different description of events: Rabbah killed R. Zera as they were celebrating and drinking.
- F.** Mar the son of Ravina<sup>21</sup> made a marriage feast for his son. When he saw that the sages were getting overly merry, he brought a precious cup worth four hundred zuz<sup>22</sup> and smashed it before them, and they grew serious. [Meg. 7a]<sup>23</sup>
- G.** R. Ashi<sup>24</sup> made a marriage feast for his son. When he saw that the sages were getting overly merry, he brought a cup of white crystal and smashed it before them, and they sobered up. [Ber. 31a]<sup>25</sup>
- H.** "Through three things a man is known", the sages teach "by his pocket, by his cup and by his anger," and the common interpretation of this presents three ways to truly know someone: their attitude to money, philanthropy or frugality, generosity or miserliness ("his pocket"), the extent to which he drinks ("his cup") and the rapidity at which he angers or ceases to be angry ("his anger"). According to this thesis, wine drinking is an

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more wine, the better the gift.

<sup>19</sup>Rabbah and Rav Zera were contemporaries in Babylonia, and it would be expected that one would host the other for a Purim seudah. Whether or not they followed Rava's dictum - another colleague and head of the academy at Pumpedita - is a question.

<sup>20</sup>Was Rav Zera actually killed by Rabbah and subsequently when they sobered up did Rabbah have the power through prayer to resurrect him the next morning is the second question. The third question is why Braude translates this story such that Rabbah only gets Rav Zera so drunk that he falls asleep, while the Rabbinic text in the original states that Rabbah killed him.

<sup>21</sup>Mar as a personality is important, because it would seem that he regularly was a depressing, melancholy figure who could not appreciate joy and celebrating as could others. Mar was well-to-do but lived a very austere life, choosing to fast regularly except on Purim, erev Yom Kippur and Shavuot. The challenge to us is to determine whether the Sages at the wedding were unreasonably drunk on wine and needed to be sobered up, or were they simply happy and dancing and celebrating which was contrary to the personality of Mar.

<sup>22</sup>Note that this is twice the traditional 200 zuz.

<sup>23</sup>Is this narrative brought here directly to contradict the previous statement of Rava, or just to moderate it?

<sup>24</sup>Have we not seen this anecdote already? Rav Ashi is the last generation of Amoraim and is generally credited with having a major role in the redaction of the Babylonian Talmud.

<sup>25</sup>Note that this anecdote does not occur close to that of Mar Bar Ravina, and we might ask whether that is significant or not.

important measure of a man, the whole man and at all times.<sup>26</sup> [Tanchuma, Korach, 12]

- I. "A man who stares at his cup believes himself to be walking on smooth ground" [Prov. 23:31]. When a man lovingly gazes at his cup, the world before him, all of it, appears to be smooth with neither valleys or hills. R. Yohanan said: The ketiv of the text is written "kis" (the wallet) while the keri as it is read is "kos" (cup) imply that even as the drunkard stares at his cup, the wine seller stares at the drunkard's wallet.<sup>27</sup> [Mid. Proverbs 23:29ff; B. Yoma 75a]
- J. Appended to this collection of traditional Aggadot is a recent statement by the Orthodox Union regarding the importance of changing the model for ourselves and our youth with regard to imbibing alcohol, especially during services.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>The Midrash wishes to describe the three qualities by which someone would be judged, and the ability to drink in moderation - not to abstain as wine is appropriate on many occasions, including Purim, Shabbat, a wedding and also not to drink to excess and embarrass oneself or family or the community.

<sup>27</sup>In an article by Professor Avigdor Shinan, he remarks on phenomenon of "keri" and "ketiv" in the verse from Proverbs, such that "kos" (cup) and "kis" (pocket) lend themselves to Midrash. I would suggest that this textual variation is the source for the Tanchuma, and because the "ayin" becomes silent relatively late, then "ka'as" (anger) becomes an easy inclusion for a triad of human values and qualities.

<sup>28</sup>To what extent can or should this statement apply to Conservative congregations? What about our Ongei Shabbat, Kiddush, etc? Do we serve wine to minors? Do we offer grape juice as an option for both youth and adults. What is the message we are sending?

# The OU Calls on its Synagogues Across North America to Set Aside February 5 Sabbath Service to Implement Elimination of 'Kiddush Clubs'

In response to an urgent request from rabbis and educators, the Orthodox Union has designated Saturday, February 5 for OU synagogues across the United States and Canada to call for the elimination of so-called "Kiddush Clubs" during their Sabbath services. To participate in the Kiddush Club, a group of congregants leaves the service to make Kiddush – often on hard liquor – during the haftarah reading.

The request was made in late December at a meeting of 65 pulpit rabbis and yeshiva principals convened by the OU in New York to deal with a variety of abuses that have been on the increase in the Orthodox teenage community and which have resulted in a number of unfortunate incidents. The representation at that meeting spanned the spectrum of the Orthodox community. Plans are underway to hold similar meetings across North America.

"It became clear at the meeting that the rabbis considered elimination of the Kiddush Clubs to be an important step - one of many - which will be required to create the desired change in our communal mindset," declared Rabbi Moshe D. Krupka, OU Executive Director of Programming, who is coordinating the OU response.

Two days after the meeting, the OU Board of Directors convened in Los Angeles and overwhelmingly approved a statement calling for an end to Kiddush Clubs.

"The Kiddush is a religious act to sanctify the day," explained Rabbi Krupka. "Kiddush clubs have the opposite effect and are simply unjustifiable," he said. "The action of the OU Board reflects how inappropriate these clubs are during the davening. Moreover, we are concerned over the general glorification of hard liquor during Kiddush."

The Kiddush Club challenges the sanctity of the synagogue in multiple ways. The OU points out that the synagogue serves as a mikdash me'at (literally a miniature Holy Temple) - a place for prayer and kedusha (sanctity). "Any behavior that detracts from the kedushat beit haknesset (the holiness of the House of Prayer) is insulting to the entire congregation," declared OU President Stephen J. Savitsky. Moreover, missing the haftarah reading leaves a void in the service for Kiddush Club participants. "The haftarah," explained OU Executive Vice President Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb, "is the one opportunity during the Sabbath prayers to encounter the message of the Prophets."

Besides denigrating the Sabbath prayer service, "these clubs also have a harmful influence on young people because of the clubs' idealization of alcohol," Rabbi Weinreb emphasized. "This is particularly disturbing because it is emblematic of the larger dangers of alcohol consumption and substance abuse in our community."

Nevertheless, Rabbi Weinreb cautioned, it is important to consider the issue of Kiddush Clubs in the appropriate context, in recognition that OU synagogues overwhelmingly are

houses devoted to prayer and study, with deep religious feeling; that the number of prayer services (minyanim) within each synagogue are growing, so that on a given Sabbath there may be multiple services taking place simultaneously; that advanced study takes place daily; and that programs for children, teens and adults are held with large attendance. "Kiddush clubs are in a minority of Orthodox synagogues and the people who attend them are a minority within that minority," Rabbi Weinreb said adding, "Kiddush clubs are an aberration from the atmosphere of kedushah so prominent in our synagogues."

Consequently, the OU has asked rabbis in all of its synagogues, even where the Kiddush Clubs do not exist, to call for their elimination from Orthodox shuls in their sermons on the Sabbath of February 5. "This will be part of a campaign through the entire OU network in North America to raise consciousness against the improper use of alcohol, to empower synagogue leadership to deal with these issues, and thereby to pave the way for a whole series of responses to the abuse problem through the OU task forces that are currently being developed," declared Mr. Savitsky, the OU President. The OU is developing "Safe Homes, Safe Shuls, Safe Schools" task forces to deal with the entire range of abuses discussed at the meeting with rabbis and educators. The OU will make available educational materials, workshops, scholars-in-residence and other creative programming to assist its synagogues in their efforts.

In his call to action, Rabbi Weinreb states: "Since the influences of the world around us inevitably invade our dalet amot (environment) - we as a community can sweep this behavior under the rug or we can isolate it and respond to it. We have chosen to respond."

The Orthodox Union, now in its second century of service to the Jewish community of North America and beyond, is a world leader in community and synagogue services, adult education, youth work through NCSY, political action through the IPA, and advocacy for persons with disabilities through Yachad and Our Way. Its kosher supervision label, the world's most recognized kosher symbol and can be found on over 275,000 products manufactured in 68 countries around the globe

The Caveat: - the use of the words "Kiddush Club" can be appropriate or misleading.

Neveh Shalom - Portland Oregon ... 28, or send e-mail. Kiddush Club is appropriate for children in grades K-5. We meet every Shabbat at 10 am. Please join us! Religious School. ... [www.nevehshalom.org/learn/](http://www.nevehshalom.org/learn/) - 31k -