

Parsha Story

Stories and Parables from
the famed Maggid of Dubno
by Rabbi Chanan Morrison

Wine in the Mikdash

Sh'mini

Chaim, a recent graduate from medical school, was looking for a promising town to settle down and start his practice. In his searches, Chaim came across another young man who was also looking to start a new business. The second man had just finished his studies at a well-known culinary institute, and wanted to open up his own bakery.

Chaim took a liking to the young baker and suggested: Let us search together for a good place to settle down. After all, is it not written, "Two are better than one" (Kohelet 4:12)?

The baker, however, disagreed.

"Chaim, you are a nice fellow, but we are better off going in separate ways. You see, we are looking for very different types of places. You need a town where they are many sick people who will require your services. I, on the other hand, need a place where the people are healthy and have a good appetite, so they will buy my cakes and breads."

Wine and the Mikdash

God commanded Aharon:

"When you enter the Communion Tent, neither you nor your descendants may drink wine or any other intoxicant" (Vayikra 10:9).

Why are the kohanim forbidden to drink wine before serving in the Beit HaMikdash?

The Mikdash and wine serve opposite functions. The Beit HaMikdash refines and elevates the soul. Furthermore, it is a place of joy and elation. As King David said: "I rejoiced when they said to me, 'Let us go to the House of God'" (T'hilim 122:1).

Wine, on the other hand, intoxicates and degrades. Wine and alcohol are depressants, used to console mourners and dull the bitter pain of unhappy individuals.

Like the doctor and the baker, wine and the Beit HaMikdash serve opposite functions; so they need to be separated.

Adapted from *Mishlei Yaakov*, pp. 217-218