

Wine - Yayin - יין

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In this [study](study.html) I would like to [study](study.html) [one](one.html) of the most interesting substances in the whole [world](worlds.html): *Wine* (Yayin - יין).

Judaism seems obsessed with wine. We take wine at nearly every [spiritual](physical.html) [event](feasts.html): Weddings, circumcisions, Shabbats, and [festivals](festivals.html). Why do we take wine at these times?

To answer this question we need to understand a bit about this substance called wine.

Wine is produced from the material within the grape. It comes from a place that is hidden within, and exemplifies that which is hidden and [needs](needs.html) to be brought forth. Likewise, spirituality is hidden in our [physical](physical.html) [world](worlds.html) and [needs](needs.html) to be brought forth.

For this reason, the numerical value of the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word for wine, *Yayin,* is the same as the numerical value of the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word for [secret](sod.html), [*Sod*](sod.html)*.* Wine exemplifies the "[secret](sod.html)" of the [physical](physical.html) – i.e. the [spiritual](physical.html). Therefore, at any [spiritual](physical.html) [time](time.html) or [event](feasts.html), Judaism attaches wine in order to bring out the [spiritual](physical.html) potential inherent in that [event](feasts.html). As the [Talmud](orallaw.html) says, "When wine goes in, the [secret](sod.html) comes out".[[1]](#footnote-1)

The Second [Law](law.html) of Thermodynamics[[2]](#footnote-2) states that: Every natural process entails an increase in the disorder and randomness (i.e., entropy) of the universe. In this [world](worlds.html), everything goes from a high state of energy to a lower state of energy. All other substances gradually deteriorate with age, even if they do improve for a short [time](time.html), like cheese. Bread gets moldy, apples rot, and even people’s [bodies](body.html) gradually deteriorate and eventually decay as it returns to [dust](rock.html).

Wine[[3]](#footnote-3) is the *only* substance in this [world](worlds.html) that gets better with age. Wine is a substance from another [world](worlds.html).

# Wine and [Secrets](sod.html)

Wine is related to [daat](daat.html), [knowledge](knowledge.html). Both maintain excellence only in humble containers. Both get better with age. Wine, and associated products, is the only substance on earth that getsbetter with age. Wine, and the [sod](sod.html), the [secret](sod.html) level of Torah, both have the same gematria,[[4]](#footnote-4) which is why the Sages [teach](teacher.html) that when “wine goes in the [secret](sod.html) comes out” - **יַיִן יָצָא סוֹד נִכְנַס**.[[5]](#footnote-5)

***Sanhedrin 38a*** *Judah and Hezekiah, the sons of R. Hiyya, once sat at table with Rabbi and uttered not a word. Whereupon he said: Give the young men plenty of strong wine, so that they may say something. When the wine took effect, they began by saying: The son of* [*David*](fathers.html)*[[6]](#footnote-6) cannot appear ere the* [*two*](two.html) *ruling houses in* [*Israel*](gen-jew.html) *shall have come to an end, viz., the Exilarchate, in* [*Babylon*](bavel.html) *and the Patriarchate in Palestine, for it is written, And he shall be for a* [*Sanctuary*](mikdash.html)*, for a stone of stumbling and for a* [*rock*](rock.html) *of offence to both houses of* [*Israel*](gen-jew.html)*.[[7]](#footnote-7) Thereupon he [Rabbi] exclaimed: You throw thorns in my* [*eyes*](body.html)*, my children![[8]](#footnote-8) At this, R. Hiyya [his disciple] remarked: Master, be not angered, for the numerical value of the* [*letters*](letters.html) *of yayin[[9]](#footnote-9) is* [*seventy*](seventy.html)*, and likewise the* [*letters*](letters.html) *of* [*sod*](sod.html)*:[[10]](#footnote-10) When yayin [wine] goes in,* [*sod*](sod.html) *[*[*secrets*](sod.html)*] comes out.*

What wine actually does is allow a person's inner (and often guarded) thoughts to come to the fore. It enables him to act out his true self and his [secret](sod.html) fantasies, whom he really [wants](needs.html) to be, without the typical restraints of societal pressures and personal inhibitions.

# Ascending

Now we can answer the question we raised at the beginning of this paper.

[Jews](gen-jew.html) take wine at every [time](time.html) they are ascending from [one](one.html) level, in this [world](worlds.html), to a higher level. We drink wine on occasions that mark distinction ([circumcision](circumcz.html)), growth ([marriage](mashal.html)), elevation ([Shabbat](sabbath.html)) and enlightenment ([Purim](purim.html), [Passover](passover.html)). At every moment of transition from the [physical](physical.html) to the [spiritual](physical.html) we take a cup of wine. We look to engage the material [world](worlds.html) and spiritualize it, and wine is the perfect symbol of that.

“Wine is a primary expression of sanctity, kedushah, since they ordain a blessing over wine, kiddush, as the proper way to inaugurate each [shabbat](sabbath.html) and [festival](festival.html) day.

# [Seventy](seventy.html) and [Seven](seven.html)

The *Maharal* developed a numerical approach in his [study](study.html) of the entire Written and [Oral Law](law.html). He noted that [numbers](nchart.html) contain special significance. A numerical [connection](connection.html) between [two](two.html) [Hebrew](hebrew.html) words is not simply a random [connection](connection.html); it illustrates a deep conceptual bond.

In the *Maharal*'s system, multiples of [ten](ten.html) do not change the character of the [number](nchart.html); therefore we can relate to [seventy](seventy.html) as a large [seven](seven.html). But, before we understand the [number](nchart.html) [seven](seven.html), let's talk about the [number](nchart.html) [six](six.html). In the [three](three.html)-dimensional [physical](physical.html) [world](worlds.html), everything has [six](six.html) sides, as in the sides of a cube; the [number](nchart.html) [six](six.html) relates to the [six](six.html) sides of the [physical](physical.html) existence in which we live. [Seven](seven.html), however, is the point at the center of the cube; it is the hidden place where everything in the [physical](physical.html) [world](worlds.html) has its [spiritual](physical.html) source. It is the point that represents unity and the inner essence of all existence.

Now we can understand the *Maharal*'s statement that wine comes from the place of concealment. The numerical value of the word for wine (yayin - יין) points us to the hidden, inner essence of [Creation](bara.html). It also illustrates our [appointed](settimes.html) task in the [world](worlds.html): bringing the [seven](seven.html), the elusive ideal, into the [six](six.html), the [physical](physical.html) nature of existence. This is a reason why wine is present for almost every significant [Jewish](gen-jew.html) lifecycle [event](feasts.html), as well at every [shabbat](sabbath.html) and [festival](festival.html). At these central moments, wine sits at the center of our table and reminds us all about our hidden, infinite potential.

# In a [Dream](dreams.html)

[One](one.html) who sees wine in a [dream](dreams.html), if he is a Rabbi, then it is good, if not then it means judgement.

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Genesis LXXXIX:8*** *R. Johanan said: All* [*dreams*](dreams.html) *are dependent on the interpretation given to them,* [*save*](salvation.html) *a* [*dream*](dreams.html) *about wine. Sometimes a* [*dream*](dreams.html) *of drinking wine augurs well, and sometimes it betokens misfortune. When a scholar drinks [in a* [*dream*](dreams.html)*], it is a good augury; when an ignoramus drinks, it betokens misfortune.*

# Forbidden During [Temple](temple.html) Service

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 10:8-11*** *Then* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *said to Aharon, "You and your sons are not to drink* ***wine*** *or other fermented drink whenever you go into the* [*Tent of Meeting*](http://www.betemunah.org/temple.html)*, or you will die. This is a lasting ordinance for the* [*generations*](toldot.html) *to come. You must distinguish between the holy and the common, between the unclean and the* [*clean*](purity.html)*, And you must* [*teach*](teacher.html) *the Israelites all the decrees* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *has given them through Moshe."*

# For Happiness

***Tehillim (***[***Psalms***](psalms1.html)***) 104:15*** *And wine gladdens the hearts of man.*

***Kohelet (Ecclesiastes) 10:19*** *Wine gladdens life.*

The [Talmud](orallaw.html), based on the above verse from [Psalms](psalms1.html), states: "There is no true happiness (i.e., truly appropriate way to celebrate a [holiday](festival.html)) without wine".[[11]](#footnote-11)

When a person drinks they forget the troubles and the depression. The challenge is to use that as a standard in everyday life and feel that way without drinking as well.

Drinking wine has other deep meanings as well. Why is it that we always start a [spiritual](physical.html) [holiday](festival.html) with Kiddush over wine? Well a [Holiday](festival.html) such as [Shabbat](sabbath.html) is a mix of [physical](physical.html) and [spiritual](physical.html) entities. The point of holidays are to lift our [physical](physical.html) activities to the level of the [spiritual](physical.html). A persons [spiritual](physical.html) level gets better with [time](time.html) (if he/she works on his/herself), however all [physical](physical.html) things get worse with [time](time.html). The only exception is wine. Wine is a [physical](physical.html) entity which gets better with [time](time.html) thus symbolizing the mixture of the [physical](physical.html) and [spiritual](physical.html). The saying is you are what you [eat](eating.html). In this case it is also you are what you drink. [Physically](physical.html) what you [eat](eating.html) or drink becomes a part of you and we hope that by keeping this in mind the unique characteristic of wine being able to mix the [physical](physical.html) with the [spiritual](physical.html) will become a part of us as well.

Another unique characteristic of wine is that it can not be stored in gold or silver. That will ruin both the wine and the vessel! Thus wine [teaches](teacher.html) us the lesson that it is what is on the inside that counts. And if the vessel (gold) is more precious than its content (wine) then both the vessel and the content become ruined. The [Talmud](orallaw.html) tells the following story: adapted from the writings of Rabbi [Yehuda](fathers.html) Appel:

The great sage Rabbi Yehoshua was the **epitome of wisdom and kindness.** Which is why a Roman countess was so stunned when she met him and found that he was **so** [**physically**](physical.html) **unattractive.** The countess commented on the tremendous contrast between his inside and outside. In response, Rabbi Yehoshua suggested that she pour some of her most precious wine into gold containers. She did this, and a few days later discovered (to her horror) that the wine had spoiled.

This is related to [Purim](purim.html) and our custom of wearing costumes. A costume hides the outside and the vessel (which is our [body](body.html) and our material belongings) and it forces us to look through the [body](body.html) and the material belongings to the inside of others and begin to value what the person really is on the inside instead of what he/she possesses or what they look like. This is why the vessel of choice for wine is glass; a vessel which reveals what is inside it.

# Condemned By Prophets

The Prophets go all out in condemning drunkenness and wild revelry.[[12]](#footnote-12)

**Pertaining To Deacons**

***1 Timothy 3:8-13*** *Likewise [must] the* [*deacons*](synagog.html) *[be] grave, not doubletongued, not given to much* ***wine****, not greedy of filthy lucre; Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also* [*first*](one.html) *be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being [found] blameless (before the Torah).**Even so [must their] wives [be] grave, not slanderers, sober, having Emunah (faithful obedience) in all things. Let the* [*deacons*](synagog.html) *be the husbands of* [*one*](one.html) *wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the emunah (faithful obedience) which is in* [*Messiah*](mashiach.html)[*Yeshua*](yeshua.html)*.*

# The Fruit Of The Tree

What was the fruit of the tree of the [knowledge](knowledge.html) of good and evil? Chazal have furnished us with several answers. For the sake of brevity we will focus on just [one](one.html): Grapes.

The claim that Eve "pressed grapes" and gave [Adam](adam.html) wine to drink, as surprising as it sounds, was the most widespread answer in our sources. Linguistically it is based on what is said in the Torah, "and she (Eve) took from its fruits".[[13]](#footnote-13) Since it does not say "she took its fruits" but rather "from its fruits", [one](one.html) can claim that Eve [created](bara.html) something from the fruit, the bunches of grapes, and this she gave to [Adam](adam.html).

[***Midrash Rabbah***](orallaw.html) ***- Genesis XIX:5*** *SHE TOOK OF THE FRUIT THEREOF, AND DID* [*EAT*](eating.html)*. R. Aibu said: She squeezed grapes and gave him.*

Aryeh Kaplan suggests that [one](one.html) way to rectify [Adam](adam.html)’s [sin](sin.html) is to abstain from drinking wine or [eating](eating.html) the fruit of the vine in any form. A person who undertakes such abstention by means of a vow is called a [Nazir](hair.html).[[14]](#footnote-14) When [one](one.html) abstains from wine, he has greater control over the power of [speech](voice.html). The nazir [wants](needs.html) to put himself in the state of [Adam](adam.html) before the [sin](sin.html). He [wants](needs.html) to rectify [Adam](adam.html)’s [sin](sin.html).[[15]](#footnote-15)

***Berachoth 40a*** *OVER FRUIT OF THE GROUND etc. This is obvious, is it not? — R. Nahman b.* [*Isaac*](isaac.html) *said: It required to be stated in view of the opinion of R. Judah, who maintains that wheat is a kind of tree. For it has been* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: R. Meir holds that* [*the tree*](thetree.html) *of which* [*Adam*](adam.html)[*ate*](eating.html) *was the vine, since the thing that most causes wailing to a man is wine, as it says, And he drank of the wine and was drunken.[[16]](#footnote-16)*

# [Purim](purim.html) The Feast of Wine

The [holiday](festival.html) of [Purim](purim.html) is the [holiday](festival.html) of wine.

Yet the [name](name.html) for the festivity is a peculiar [one](one.html) - "*mishteh*", which loosely translates as a drinking party. And what were the beverages on tap? Only wine! In [one](one.html) of the many textual references to wine, the Book of [Esther](esther.html) records, "Royal wine was served in *abundance*".[[17]](#footnote-17)

The Sages of the [Talmud](orallaw.html) asked a question about this passage: How do we qualify the term "abundance"? They answered that each guest drank wine whose vintage was older than he.[[18]](#footnote-18)

The *Maharal* of Prague, [one](one.html) of Judaism's most noted philosophers and Kabbalists, gives us a fascinating [insight](insights.html) into the Rabbis' statement:

**Why did they do this** [serve each guest wine older than he]**? Because there is an essential** [**connection**](connection.html) **between wine and a person; the whole** [**time**](time.html) **that a person grows older, his thoughts become clearer. So too with wine; the more that it ages, the better it becomes.[[19]](#footnote-19)**

Wine is unique in that it becomes better…

Though the *Maharal*'s comment can be understood at [face](body.html) value, he is also hinting to a profound idea about the nature of wine. Everything else in the [world](worlds.html) deteriorates over [time](time.html), but wine is unique in that it becomes better. This distinctive quality hints to [HaShem's](hashem.html) intended purpose for all [creation](bara.html).

Man was never supposed to die; like a fine wine, [HaShem](hashem.html) intended that man would constantly improve with age.

At the end of the Book of [Esther](esther.html), Mordecai pronounces that the 14th and 15th of the month of [Adar](feasts.html) should be celebrated as "days of *mishteh* and joy". The celebrations must, like the party of King Ahasuerus and Queen Vashti, include wine. But unlike the royal party, [Purim](purim.html) is not about drinking to get drunk. The point is not to numb our senses, but rather to attune them to the hidden reality that is normally hidden from our [eyes](body.html). By drinking wine on [Purim](purim.html), we have the ability to see through the [six](six.html) sides of the [physical](physical.html) straight through to the center, to the absolute essence of ourselves and to the boundless possibilities that surround us. When wine enters, the [secrets](sod.html) are truly revealed.[[20]](#footnote-20)

**The** [**Connection**](connection.html)

The meaning of wine in [Jewish](gen-jew.html) practice is always a symbol, a bridge, a mechanism driving a step from [one](one.html) level to a higher level. Whenever we connect the [physical](physical.html) to the [spiritual](physical.html) we use wine. We always take wine as a point of [connection](connection.html) between the material and the [spiritual](physical.html), as we elevate. Wine represents what Judaism is all about: the fusing of the holy and the mundane, the [spiritual](physical.html) and [physical](physical.html), the [body](body.html) and soul.

“**In vino veritas**” is a saying attributed to Pliny the Elder. In wine there is truth. Wine represents the hidden aspects of the Torah.

The revealed part of Torah is like water: Just as the human [body](body.html) cannot exist without water, so the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) People cannot survive [spiritually](physical.html) without the revealed Torah.

The [secrets](sod.html) of the Torah are like wine: They must be imbibed with care and are not equally tolerated by all. Wine is a substance which when used correctly is transcendent; yet when used incorrectly, makes its victim part of the scenery.

***Pesachim 109a*** *Rabbi* [*Yehuda*](fathers.html) *Ben Beteira said: When the* [*Holy Temple*](temple.html) *stood, there was no rejoicing without meat, as it says,****[[37]](http://www.betemunah.org/r2r.html%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn37%22%20%5Co%20%22)*** *“You shall slaughter offerings and* [*eat*](eating.html) *them there and rejoice before* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *your G-d.” Now that the Holy* [*Temple*](temple.html) *is not* [*standing*](mashal.html)*, there is no rejoicing without wine, as it says,****[[38]](http://www.betemunah.org/r2r.html%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn38%22%20%5Co%20%22)*** *“Wine makes the* [*heart*](body.html) *of man rejoice”.*

***Eruvin 65a*** *When wine goes in, the* [*secret*](sod.html) *comes out.*

We are [taught](teacher.html) that there are “[seventy](seventy.html) faces to the Torah”.[[39]](http://www.betemunah.org/r2r.html%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn39) The word for wine in [Hebrew](hebrew.html), יין yayin, equals [seventy](seventy.html), as does the word [sod](sod.html), ‘[secret](sod.html)’. The statement, “When wine goes in the [secret](sod.html) comes out”, can be understood to mean that the proper consumption of wine with the right [spiritual](physical.html) intentions draws forth from within us [new](new.html) [insights](insights.html) into the [seventy](seventy.html) facets of Torah, the inner, [secret](sod.html) dimensions of the Torah.

Wine is taken by the Bnei [Israel](gen-jew.html) whenever they transition from their current [spiritual](physical.html) state to a higher [spiritual](physical.html) state. Therefore, taking wine at [Purim](purim.html) and [Pesach](passover.html) is done with the specific intent to move to a [spiritually](physical.html) higher state. We drink more wine on [Purim](purim.html) and [Pesach](passover.html) than at any other [time](time.html). This larger than normal intake of wine forms a [connection](connection.html) between [Purim](purim.html) and [Pesach](passover.html).

Wine plays a crucial role in the [Purim](purim.html) celebration and a crucial part in the book of [Esther](esther.html). Additionally, [Pesach](passover.html) is famous for the [four](four.html) cups of wine which we drink at the [seder](haggada.html). Yet there is a difference, essentially, that in the case of [Purim](purim.html), the purpose of wine is to dull our senses, whereas in the case of [Pesach](passover.html), it is to heighten our awareness.

In [connection](connection.html) with [Purim](purim.html), the [Talmud](orallaw.html) says, “A person is obligated to drink until he doesn’t [know](daat.html) the difference between ‘Cursed be [Haman](esther.html)’ and ‘Blessed be Mordechai’”. On [Pesach](passover.html), the [four](four.html) cups of wine represent the [four](four.html) expressions of [redemption](redemption.html) which the Torah uses, namely:

“I took you out”,

“I [saved](salvation.html) you”,

“I [redeemed](redemption.html) you” and

“I took you for Myself as a People.”

On [Purim](purim.html), drinking of wine is used in conjunction with the idea of *hester panim*, of masquerade, of changing the identity, of confusion and forgetting. On [Pesach](passover.html), wine is used to bring into sharp focus the different aspects and nuances of [redemption](redemption.html), so that we can fulfill the [commandment](cmds613.html) to tell the story of our [Exodus from Egypt](thebirth.html) to our children and grand-children.

Like all Biblical [holy days](festivals.html), it is a [mitzva](cmds613.html) to have a seuda (great big meal) on [Purim](purim.html) including meat. In addition, this seuda includes lots of wine, more than we normally take for kiddush. The [Purim](purim.html) [feast](festival.html) must be held during the day, usually after Mincha (afternoon [prayers](prayer.html)). This [Purim](purim.html) meal is different, in that not only do we [eat](eating.html), but we also drink.

Throughout the [Purim](purim.html) story, wine is a key factor in the drama. It’s Achashverosh’s drunken demand that Vashti show off that brings her downfall and clears the way for [Esther](esther.html) to become queen. It’s again a wine feast that [Esther](esther.html) invites [Haman](esther.html) and the king to, which results in [Haman](esther.html)’s downfall.

Because the miracle of [Purim](purim.html) came through wine, we drink lots of wine on [Purim](purim.html):

\* Vashti’s downfall came as a result of a wine feast.

\* [Haman](esther.html)’s downfall came as a result of a wine feast.

The Hakhamim of the [Talmud](orallaw.html) said: “On [Purim](purim.html), [one](one.html) should drink “until he can no longer tell the difference between ‘Cursed be [Haman](esther.html)’ and ‘Blessed be Mordechai’”.[[40]](http://www.betemunah.org/r2r.html%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn40%22%20%5Co%20%22)

The [time](time.html) and place for wine drinking is the festive meal, [one](one.html) of the [four](four.html) observances of [Purim](purim.html). **Each observance, or** [**mitzva**](cmds613.html)**, is designed to increase feelings of unity amongst the** [**Jewish**](gen-jew.html)[**nation**](nations.html). After the other [three](three.html) have been fulfilled, the [Jew](gen-jew.html) sits down at his meal and drinks. The last barriers break down and a feeling of unity and [connection](connection.html) prevails.

[Pesach](passover.html) begins with the [seder](haggada.html)’s [four](four.html) cups of wine and completes with the [giving of the Torah](shavuot.html) on [Sinai](stages.html), where the Bnei [Israel](gen-jew.html) stood as [*one*](one.html) *man* in complete unity.

# In The [Incense](ketoret.html)

*Soaking the tziporen in Cyprus wine to make it azah [pungent or strong] alludes to the wine [*[*secret teachings*](sod.html)*] of the Torah which imbues* [*Israel*](gen-jew.html) *with the ability to remain firm and unyielding in their faith when they* [*walk*](walking.html) *among the* [*nations*](nations.html)*.*

# Wine Made By [Gentiles](gen-jew.html)

To be considered kosher, a [Sabbath](sabbath.html)-observant [Jew](gen-jew.html) must be involved in the entire wine making process from the harvesting of the grapes, through fermentation to bottling. Any ingredients used, including finings, must be kosher.

The rabbis prohibited drinking the wine produced by a [gentile](gen-jew.html) in order to prevent intermarriage. Now there doesn’t seem to be a direct causal relationship between drinking wine and intermarrying. Buying a Gallo wine in the store doesn’t seem to entail going off and marrying a [gentile](gen-jew.html). It seems pretty far fetched to say that if a person sits in his house and drinks the wine of [gentiles](gen-jew.html) he will end up intermarrying. If Chazal were concerned to prevent intermarriage, they might have prohibited us from something that was more directly related to it, like conversing with non-[Jewish](gen-jew.html) women. But they didn’t do that. They forbade us to drink their wine—not their beer or their whiskey, just their wine. So on the surface, the prohibition of drinking [gentile](gen-jew.html) wine may seem far-fetched and excessive.

But it’s not, because the intention is not that if a person doesn’t drink [gentile](gen-jew.html) wine he won’t intermarry. That’s not the point. The point is that when [Jews](gen-jew.html) over [generations](toldot.html) [know](daat.html) that they cannot drink the wine that a [gentile](gen-jew.html) has touched, it engenders a sense of separateness that constitutes an inner obstruction to marrying outside the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [community](community.html). Wine was such an important ingredient of social [relations](marriageact.html), that a prohibition forbidding [gentile](gen-jew.html) wine would have the desired effect. It should be noted that the rabbis could not create [new](new.html) prohibitions that had no basis in the Torah. Any prohibition that they would legislate had to be similar in some way to a prohibition in the Torah. There is a prohibition of wine in the Torah. It pertains to wine that is used in pagan religious ceremonies. They extended that prohibition. Since there is no prohibition of beer or whiskey in the Torah, they could not prohibit it themselves.

## Boiled Wine

When kosher wine is *yayin mevushal* ("יין מבושל" - "cooked" or "boiled")

An interesting prohibition concerning wines relates to the status of boiled wine. Kosher wine that has been cooked before any contact with a non-[Jew](gen-jew.html) is exempted from the injunction. Boiled wine is considered "improper" to be offered as a libation to an [idol](idolatry.html): therefore, if a non-[Jew](gen-jew.html) subsequently came into contact with boiled wine, the wine is still permissible to drink. Many kosher wines today bear markings to indicate that they have been boiled. In such a case, it will state on the label "Yayin Mevushal" (boiled wine). Extra caution should be taken with a kosher wine that has not been previously boiled, lest a non-[Jew](gen-jew.html) or [Jew](gen-jew.html) who is not Shomer Shabbos should come in contact with the bottle of wine (maid etc.)

# Kiddush

Friday night Kiddush is a Biblical requirement,[[21]](#footnote-21) the only alternative to Kiddush *wine[[22]](#footnote-22)* on Friday night, is to recite Kiddush over bread.

The [connection](connection.html) between the [Shabbat](sabbath.html) and the [Mishkan](mikdash.html), ([Sanctuary](mikdash.html)) which defines the 39 prohibited Melachot on [Shabbat](sabbath.html), may also explain why only wine and bread[[23]](#footnote-23) are acceptable. Both wine and bread were used in the [Temple](temple.html) sacrifices. When reciting Kiddush over bread in the absence of wine on Friday night, the following procedure is followed. [One](one.html) washes [one](one.html)’s [hands](fourteen.html), covers the [two](two.html) loaves of bread with a cloth, places [one](one.html)’s [hands](fourteen.html) on the cloth and recites Vayechulu. The blessing for wine which would otherwise precede the Kiddush blessing, is replaced by the blessing for bread.

Havdalah, is, according to most opinions, of Rabbinic origin, and accordingly, the Rabbis have a more flexible approach. The preferred beverage for Havdalah is still wine. Nevertheless, if [one](one.html) finds oneself, without wine, [one](one.html) may use other beverages which qualify as “Chamar Medinah”, which, loosely translated, means, the “popular beverage of the location”. The precise meaning of “Chamar Medina”, which beverages qualify as Chamar Medina, and under what circumstances they may be used instead of wine, is the subject of animated [Halachic](walking.html) debate. Rav Ovadiah [Yosef](joseph.html), says that a drink is not considered Chamar Medina unless it is both bitter in taste and intoxicating. The only reason, he argues, that [one](one.html) is allowed to drink non-alcoholic beverages before Kiddush on [Shabbat](sabbath.html) morning, is precisely because they are not considered “drinks” for the purpose of Kiddush. It follows therefore, that they do not qualify for Kiddush or Havdalah.

The situation with [Shabbat](sabbath.html) morning is the most lenient of the [three](three.html). This is because it is of Rabbinic origin and the Kiddush that welcomed [Shabbat](sabbath.html) has already been made Friday night. Accordingly, the accepted practice is to allow Chamar Medina for [Shabbat](sabbath.html) morning Kiddush, where wine, although available, is either not easily accessible, or too expensive. And on [Shabbat](sabbath.html) morning, whisky is in a category all of its own. Unlike other beverages that qualify as Chamar Medina, whisky can be chosen over wine, even where the [two](two.html) bottles are [standing](mashal.html) side by side. According to the [Mishna](orallaw.html) Berura, however, [one](one.html) would have to use a wine-size Kiddush cup which holds between 3-6 ounces and drink most of it in [one](one.html) shot. According to other authorities, a small whisky glass is sufficient.

\* \* \*

[Psalm](psalms1.html) 104:15 Wine maketh glad the [heart](body.html).

Num 20:14 – 22:1

Judges 11:12-21

Mk 12:13-17

Lk 20:20-26

Rm 4:16-25

Mt. 23:1-12

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1. Sanhedrin 38a [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Also known as the Law of Entropy [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. I will be using ‘wine’ to speak to a class of alcoholic beverages that improve with age. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The numerical value of wine (Yayin - יין) is 70 and is equal to that of secret (sod - סוד), which is also 70. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The word “wine” (יַיִן, yayin) is numerically 70, so is the word “sod” (סוֹד, secret). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. I.e., the [Messiah](mashiach.html). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Isa. VIII, 14 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. They were foretelling the abolition of the Nasi's office which he, Rabbi, occupied. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. יין - 10 + 10 + 50 = 70 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. סוד - 60 + 6 + 4 =70. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Pesachim 109a [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. See Isaiah 5:11-14, and 24:9 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Bereshit (Genesis) 3:6 [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Since the destruction of the Temple, we are forbidden from taking a nazirite vow. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. The Aryeh Kaplan Reader [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Bereshit (Genesis) 9:21. The reference is to Noah. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Esther 1:7 [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Megilla 12a [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Or Chadash [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Based on the teachings of the *Maharal* of Prague. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Mishna Berura 289:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Mishna Berura 272:30, Aruch Hashulchan O.C. 272:13, Rema O.C. 182:2, Aruch Hashulchan 182:4, 272:14 [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. O.C. 272:9;Rema. However, when even bread is unavailable one may use chamar medina for the Friday night kiddush, as well. Kaf Hachaim 272:50 [↑](#footnote-ref-23)