

Taking Recreational Drugs & Hallucinogenics



Presented by
Rabbi Yossi Michalowicz

What Does the Torah Say About Drugs?

- Recreational Drugs
- Medicinal Drugs
- Pain Killers
- Investing in Marijuana
- Alcohol
- Purim



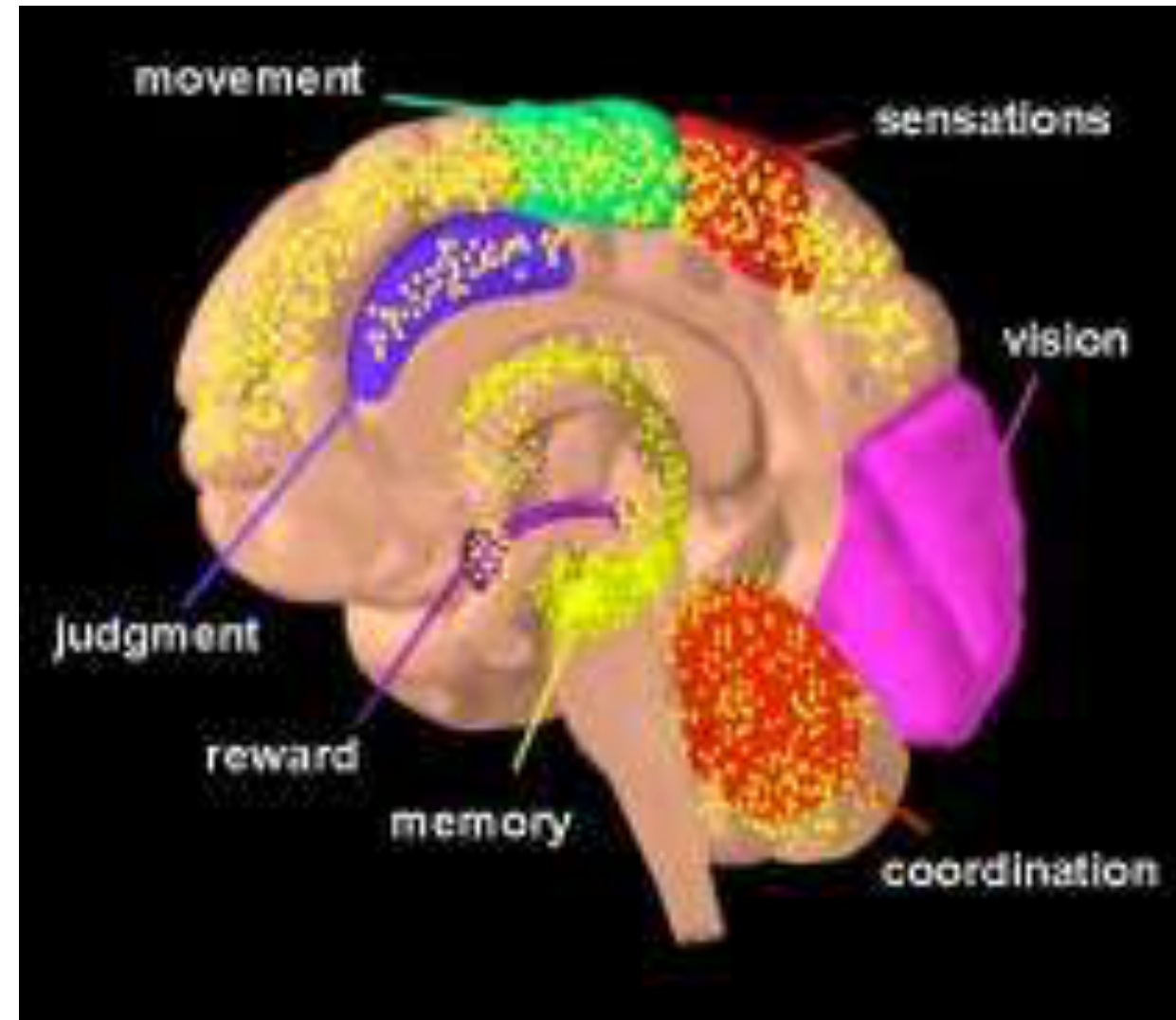
- Cannabis is now legal in Canada for both recreational and medicinal purposes.
- Medicinal use of cannabis was legalized nationwide in 2001 while recreational use of cannabis came into effect on October 17, 2018.
- Canada is now the second country in the world, after Uruguay, to formally legalize the cultivation, possession, acquisition and consumption of cannabis and its byproducts.

What is Marijuana ?

- The main *psychoactive* (mind-altering) chemical in marijuana, responsible for most of the intoxicating effects that people seek, is *delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol* (THC).
- The chemical is found in resin produced by the leaves and buds primarily of the female cannabis plant.
- The plant also contains more than 500 other chemicals, including more than 100 compounds that are chemically related to THC, called *cannabinoids*

Short Term Effects

When a person smokes marijuana, THC quickly passes from the lungs into the bloodstream. The blood carries the chemical to the brain and other organs throughout the body. The body absorbs THC more slowly when the person eats or drinks it. In that case, they generally feel the effects after 30 minutes to 1 hour.



THC acts on numerous areas in the brain (in yellow)

- THC acts on specific brain cell receptors that ordinarily react to natural THC-like chemicals.
- These natural chemicals play a role in normal brain development and function.
- Marijuana over activates parts of the brain that contain the highest number of these receptors.
- This causes the "high" that people feel.

Other Effects Include:

- altered senses (for example, seeing brighter colors)
- altered sense of time
- changes in mood
- impaired body movement
- difficulty with thinking and problem-solving
- impaired memory
- hallucinations (when taken in high doses)
- delusions (when taken in high doses)
- psychosis (risk is highest with regular use of high potency marijuana)



- Police in Ohio responded to a rather interesting 911 call involving a cannabis aficionado who realized he may have overdone it a little. Austintown police visited a man's residence after he dialed 911 and complained he was "too high" after smoking some cannabis.
- When the officers arrived at the scene, they heard the 22-year old man "groaning from a room" and found him "lying on the floor in the fetal position...surrounded by a plethora of Doritos, Pepperidge Farm Goldfish and Chips Ahoy cookies."
- Clearly this young man had his munchies covered, but he forgot to check our list of handy tips for counteracting a too-intense high. Rule #1, dude: DON'T PANIC.

Long Term Effects

Marijuana also affects brain development. When people begin using marijuana as teenagers, the drug may impair thinking, memory, and learning functions and affect how the brain builds connections between the areas necessary for these functions. Researchers are still studying how long marijuana's effects last and whether some changes may be permanent.

New Zealand Study

A study from New Zealand conducted in part by researchers at Duke University showed that people who started smoking marijuana heavily in their teens and had an ongoing marijuana use disorder lost an average of 8 IQ points between ages 13 and 38. The lost mental abilities didn't fully return in those who quit marijuana as adults. Those who started smoking marijuana as adults didn't show notable IQ declines

Other Health Effects of Marijuana - Physical Effects

- **Breathing problems.** Marijuana smoke irritates the lungs, and people who smoke marijuana frequently can have the same breathing problems as those who smoke tobacco. These problems include daily cough and phlegm, more frequent lung illness, and a higher risk of lung infections. Researchers so far haven't found a higher risk for lung cancer in people who smoke marijuana.
- **Increased heart rate.** Marijuana raises heart rate for up to 3 hours after smoking. This effect may increase the chance of heart attack. Older people and those with heart problems may be at higher risk.
- **Problems with child development during and after pregnancy.** marijuana use during pregnancy is linked to lower birth weight and increased risk of both brain and behavioral problems in babies. If a pregnant woman uses marijuana, the drug may affect certain developing parts of the fetus's brain. Children exposed to marijuana in the womb have an increased risk of problems with attention, memory, and problem-solving compared to unexposed children. Some research also suggests that moderate amounts of THC are excreted into the breast milk of nursing mothers. With regular use, THC can reach amounts in breast milk that could affect the baby's developing brain. Other recent research suggests an increased risk of preterm births.
- **Intense nausea and vomiting.** Regular, long-term marijuana use can lead to some people to develop Cannabinoid Hyperemesis Syndrome. This causes users to experience regular cycles of severe nausea, vomiting, and dehydration, sometimes requiring emergency medical attention.

Mental Effects

Long-term marijuana use has been linked to mental illness in some people, such as:

- temporary hallucinations
- temporary paranoia
- worsening symptoms in patients with schizophrenia —a severe mental disorder with symptoms such as hallucinations, paranoia, and disorganized thinking
- depression
- anxiety
- and suicidal thoughts among teens



How Does Marijuana Affect a Person's Life?

Compared to those who don't use marijuana, those who frequently use large amounts report the following:

- lower life satisfaction
- poorer mental health
- poorer physical health
- more relationship problems

People also report less academic and career success. For example, marijuana use is linked to a higher likelihood of dropping out of school. It's also linked to more job absences, accidents, and injuries.

Is Marijuana Addictive ?

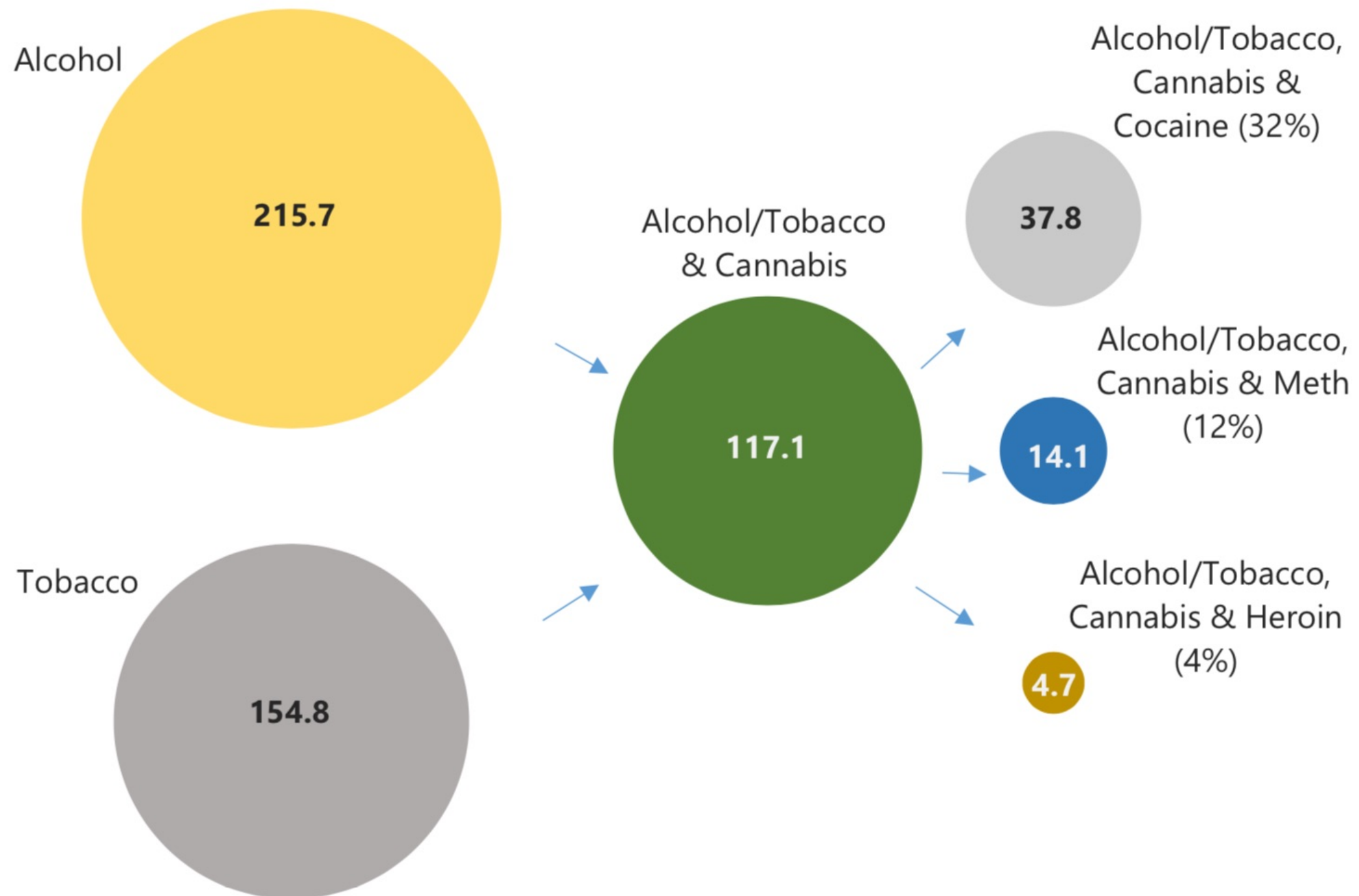
Marijuana use can lead to the development of a substance use disorder, a medical illness in which the person is unable to stop using even though it's causing health and social problems in their life. Severe substance use disorders are also known as addiction. Research suggests that between 9 and 30 percent of those who use marijuana may develop some degree of marijuana use disorder. People who begin using marijuana before age 18 are four to seven times more likely than adults to develop a marijuana use disorder.

Many people who use marijuana long term and are trying to quit report mild withdrawal symptoms that make quitting difficult. These include:

- grouchiness
- sleeplessness
- decreased appetite
- anxiety
- cravings

Figure 3. Number of People Who Have Used Alcohol, Tobacco, Cannabis, and Other Illicit Drugs

Number of People (in millions) Who Have Ever Used:



Rav Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler

(1892 – 30 December 1953)

Orthodox rabbi, Talmudic scholar, and Jewish philosopher of the 20th century. He is best known for being the mashgiach ruchani ("spiritual counselor") of the Ponevezh yeshiva in Israel and through collections of his writings published posthumously by his pupils.

“I intuit and it is intellectually certain to me, for example, that smoking cigarettes is bad for my health...nevertheless, I go ahead and (continue to) smoke. Why is this? Clearly an emotional attachment cannot be overridden by that which I know rationally.”

(Michtav Me'Eliyahu, Volume 1, page 79)



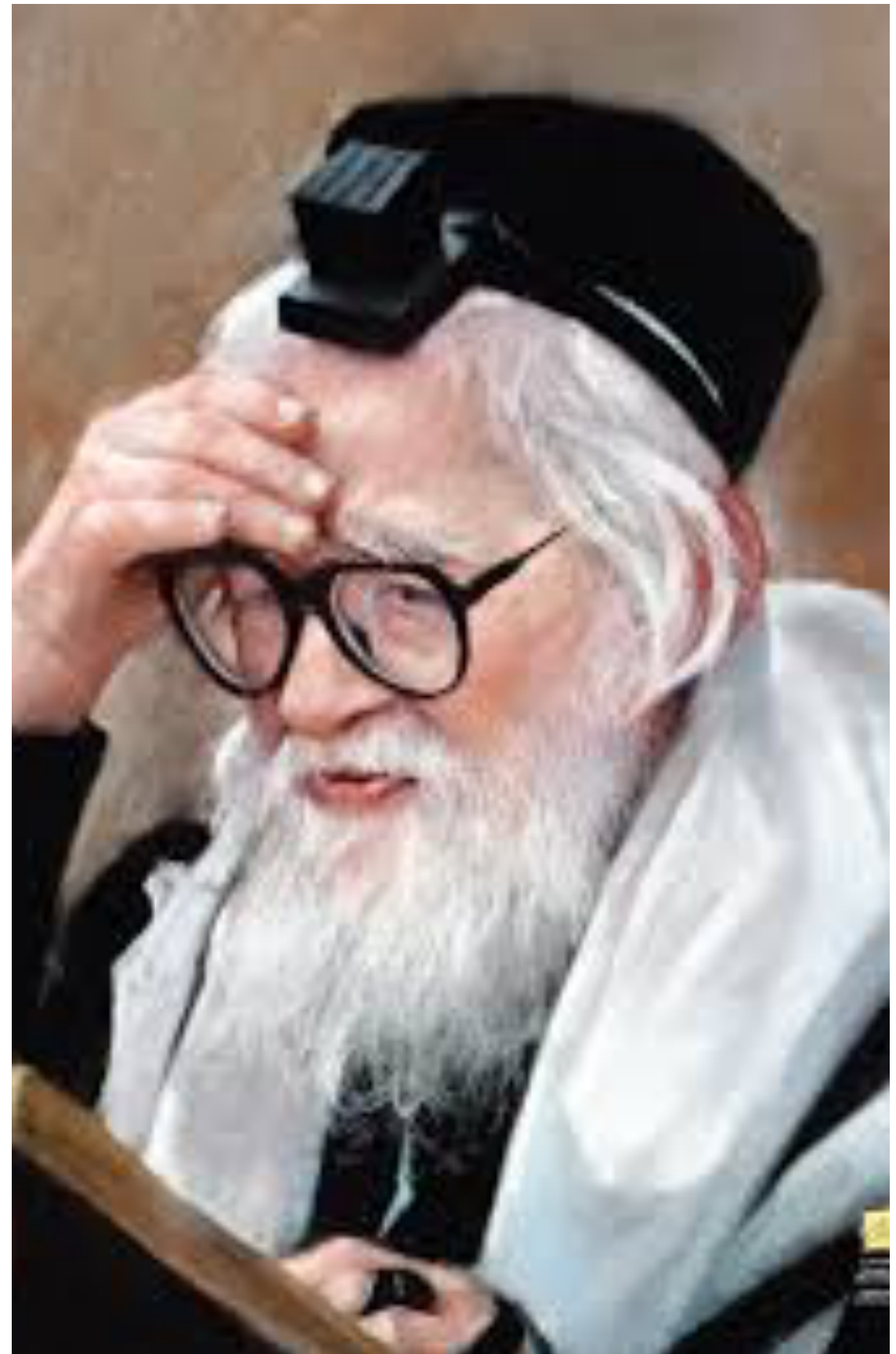
Gateshead, England

Once, while still in Gateshead, Rav Dessler put up a sign on his office door stating that he had officially quit smoking. He explained that he was testing himself to see which temptation is greater: his desire to continue smoking, or his desire to be seen as a man of truth!



Elazar Menachem Man Shach
(January 1, 1899. – November 2, 2001) A leading Lithuanian-Jewish Haredi rabbi in Bnei Brak, Israel. He also served as one of three co-deans of the Ponevezh Yeshiva in Bnei Brak.

“When I used to smoke I thought I could never understand a Tosefos without a cigarette; now that I quit I do not know how I ever managed to learn with a cigarette!”



Samson Raphael Hirsch

(June 20, 1808 – December 31, 1888)
German Orthodox rabbi best known as the intellectual founder of the Torah im Derech Eretz school of contemporary Orthodox Judaism.

Rav Hirsch was at one time so addicted to snuff that before retiring to bed one evening he caught himself placing his snuff box under his pillow in case he wanted a pinch in the middle of the night. Shocked at the power his habit had over him he quit that night, never to touch it again.



Talmud Pesachim 113a

- Rav said to Ḥiyya, his son: Do not get into the habit of drinking medications
- **Rashbam:**
 1. So as not to become addicted to the point of having to rob people for money,
 2. Even the most therapeutic drug in the world may be good for one part of the body and harmful to another, as there is no such thing as a perfect drug.

A Halachik Approach

- **Mishna Berura** 11, Qouting Tur Shulcahn Aruch OC 155,2: ומצוה להנהיג עצמו במדה טובה [טור] וְהִנְהִיגָה טוֹבָה לְשִׁמּוֹר בְּרִיאָתוֹ כְּדִי שִׁיְהִיָּה בָּרִיא וְחִזְקָה לְעִבּוּדַת הַבּוֹרָא יִתְעַלֶּה [טור] it is a mitzvah to take care of one's health so that he may serve Hashem in good health and with strength
- **Rambam Daos 4,1 & 15:** Since maintaining a healthy and sound body is among the ways of God - for one cannot understand or have any knowledge of the Creator, if he is ill - therefore, he must avoid that which harms the body and accustom himself to that which is healthful and helps the body become stronger...Overeating is like poison to anyone's body. It is the main source of all illness. Most illnesses which afflict a man are caused by harmful foods or by his filling his belly and overeating, even of healthful foods.
- **Shulchan Aruch C.M. 427:** Likewise, one has a positive duty to remove and guard oneself of any life-threatening obstacle, as it is said "beware and guard your soul". If one did not removed said obstacles, one has cancelled a positive commandment and transgressed "do not bring bloodguilt" (Deut. 22:8).
- Many Poskim are of the opinion that someone who is careless with his health actually transgresses a Biblical prohibition
- **Sefer Nishmas Avraham**, Rabbi Dr. Avraham Sofer Abraham writes in the name of Rav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach zt"l that someone who takes any type of drugs, including marijuana, transgresses this prohibition.

פשוט שהוא דבר אסור מכמה עיקרי דינים

שבתורה

חרא שהוא מקלקל ומכלה את הגוף

ואף אם נמצאו אנשים בריאים שלא מזיק להם כל כך אבל מקלקל הוא את הדעת ואינם יכולים להבין דבר לאשורו שזה עוד יותר חמור

שלבד שמונע עצמו מלמוד התורה כראוי הוא מניעה גם מתפלה וממצות התורה שעשייה בלא דעת הראוי הוא כלא קיימם

ועוד שהוא גודם תאווה גדולה אשר הוא יותר מתאווה אכלה וכדומה הצריכים להאדם לחיותו ויש שלא יוכלו לצמצם ולהעביר תאותם

והוא איסור החמור שנאמר בבן סורר ומורה על תאווה היותר גדולה שיש לו לאכילה אף שהוא לאכילת כשרות

וכ"ש שאסור להביא עצמו לתאווה גדולה עוד יותר ולדבר שליכא שום צורך
להאדם בזה שהוא אסור

ואף שלמלקות נימא שאיו עונשין מן הדין מ"מ לאיסורא ודאי עובר על לאו זה

ואיכא גם הטעם דאיכא בבן סורר ומורה שסופו שילסטם
את הבריות

ועוד שהאב והאם של אלו שמעשנין זה מצטערים מאד אשר עוברין על מצות
כבוד אב ואם

ועוד איכא איסור העשה דקדושים תהיו כפירוש הרמב"ן בחומש

וגם הם גורמים לאיסורים הרבה אחרים לבד זה

סוף דבר הוא פשוט וברור שהוא מאיסורים חמורים
וצריך להשתדל בכל היכולת להעביר טומאה זו מכל בני
ישראל ובפרט מאלו שלומדין בישיבות

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein

Igros Moshe Yoreh Deah Vol. III #35 - 1975

- It affects a person physically
- And mentally.
- It further prevents him from studying Torah properly
- and from davening properly.
- It further affects the proper performance of Mitzvos, eliciting a zombie-like element in their performance.
- It elicits within the user a stronger desire for things, and explains that this is one of the problems associated with a Ben Sorer U Moreh, the rebellious son discussed in Dvarim 21:18.
- It is an abnegation of the Mitzvah of Kivud Av v'Aim
- It is also a violation of the Ramban's understanding of Kedoshim ti'hiyu, the commandment to be holy.
- Such activity induces the user to violate other Mitzvos in the Torah, thus increasing impurity in Israel.

Rav Chaim Kanievsky

Shaar HaTeshuvos #25

- Marijuana, legal or not, still most certainly constitutes a “gateway drug” leading the user to begin experimenting with other drugs that are illegal and dangerous.
- This obligation appears to be a biblical one predicated upon the verse, “venishmartem me’od bnafshosaichem – And you shall be very careful regarding yourselves (Dvarim 4:9).” not just limited to “veNishmartem” (Dvarim 4:9).
- The verse later on (Dvarim 4:15), “Rak hishamer lecha” is understood by most Poskim to actually comprise a second Mitzvah
- There is also a third Mitzvah, “V’Chai Bahem – And you shall live by them” (VaYikra 18:5).

Current High Potent THC Marijuana

- The primary problem with the current available cannabis in dispensaries in Colorado is that the THC content is not like it used to be.
- Prior to the 1990s it was less than 2%.
- In the 1990s it grew to 4%,
- and between 1995 and 2015 there has been a 212% increase in THC content in the marijuana flower.
- In 2017 the most popular strains found in dispensaries in Colorado had a range of THC content from 17–28% such as found in the popular strain named “Girl Scout Cookie.
- Sadly these plants producing high levels of THC are incapable of producing much CBD, the protective component of the plant so these strains have minimal CBD.
- For example the Girl Scout Cookie strain has only 0.09–0.2% CBD.

Addiction

- The marijuana of old used to be classified as a hallucinogen and was thought to not cause addiction because there was no identified withdrawal syndrome.
- This has changed and with the increased potency of THC there is a definite recognized withdrawal syndrome which includes increased anger, irritability, depression, restlessness, headache, loss of appetite, insomnia and severe cravings for marijuana.
- It has been reported that 9% of those who experiment with marijuana will become addicted;
- 17% of those who start using marijuana as teenagers will become addicted;
- and 25–50% of those who use daily will become addicted.
- A 2015 study carried out in the UK found that high-potency cannabis use is associated with increased severity of dependence, especially in young people.

EVEN WORSE THAN RAV MOSHE'S TIME

As far as the other effects mentioned by Rav Moshe are concerned, they apply even more so nowadays, because the concentration of THC has clearly increased. Thus the issues of Bitul Torah, effect upon Davening and Mitzvah performance clearly apply even more. The same is true with Rav Moshe's latter points.

Use or Abuse

- **There are those who will argue that occasional use of marijuana is not dangerous and should be acceptable within the parameters of halacha.**
- **Perhaps there are formulations of the drug that are not as addictive as others and those can be used occasionally to relax or escape a stressful reality.**
- **Perhaps this is no different than the occasional smoker or the occasional drinker.**
- **Rav Moshe Feinstein threw out this argument by stating unequivocally that even when a drug is not clearly used in a way that will pose a health risk, it is still forbidden to use.**
- **For many people, the effect of the drug is that it brings about an unnatural lust.**
- **He, therefore, reasoned that taking occasional recreational drugs is compared to the prohibition of the ben sorer u'moreh – the rebellious son who has not yet contravened any specific Torah prohibition but nevertheless has put himself into a downward spiral that is so extreme that the Torah judges him according to his future sins.**
- **The prohibition against bringing on an unnatural lust is clear in the Poskim.**

Sefer Hachinuch - 387

To not wander after the thoughts of the heart and the vision of the eyes:

- ***This commandment is really a fundamental principle in the religion***, as evil thoughts are the progenitors of impurities, and the actions are their descendants
- Understand my son, and let it be a jewel in your mouth, that which they, may their memory be blessed, said (Avot 4:2), "One sin leads to another, and one commandment leads to another."
- As if you allow yourself to fulfill your evil desire one time, you will be drawn after it many times.
- But if you merit to be 'mighty in the land' and to conquer your evil inclination and close your eyes from seeing evil one time, it will be easier for you to do so many times.
- ***As lust pulls the body like wine draws the drinker. Drunkards can never be sated by wine, but they will rather have a great desire for it. And according to [the large quantity that] they have gotten themselves accustomed, the stronger their desire will become.***
- And if only they would drink a cup of water, it would temper the burning fire of [their] desire for wine, and make it pleasant for them.
- The same is true here: The more a person allows himself to be governed by his desires and to allow them to become habit, the stronger his evil inclination becomes every day. But in his preventing himself from them, he will always be happy with his portion every day; and he will see that 'God made people straight, but they seek out many schemes' for no reason of any point.

Halachik Conclusion

- Aside from the fact that more of our People are using it, abusing it and suffering from its negative consequences, not much has changed since these halachic rulings were issued.
- Certainly, the recent legalization in marijuana in Canada should have no bearing on halacha.
- If the gadol hador called marijuana an issur chamur forty-five years ago then is there any reason to believe that its status has changed in the eyes of halacha?

Rav Yitzchok Zilberstein

(born 1934) is a prominent Orthodox rabbi, posek and expert in medical ethics. He is the *av beis din* of the Ramat Elchanan neighborhood of Bnei Brak, the Rosh Kollel of Kollel Bais David in Holon,^[3] and the Rav of Mayanei Hayeshua Hospital in Bnei Brak. His opinion is frequently sought and quoted on all matters of halakha for the Israeli Lithuanian yeshiva community.

QUESTION: Is it was permitted to invest in an American company that produces and sells Hashish and Marijuana in areas where the law permits its sale – even for non-medical purposes.



“This drug is not forbidden on account of the fact that the law forbids it. Rather, it is forbidden because this drug is harmful to people. It brings damage to the world. If our sages have said that one who gambles with dice is ineligible to testify because he does not partake in yishuvo shel olam, certainly it is forbidden to involve oneself in something that is destructive to the world. These people also bring danger to others.”

Guardian of the Foolish

- The Gemara contains examples of circumstances that the rabbis deemed as unhealthy or even dangerous, yet once they became commonplace, they were permitted by a principle known as “Shomer Pe’sa’im Hashem” – Hashem is the Guardian of the foolish.
- Perhaps we can apply this principle and say that once the use of marijuana became commonplace, we should now rely on Hashem, may He have mercy, to watch over the fools.

This logic is inherently flawed

- The rabbis relied on this principle only if there is no clearly posed threat of danger.
- But if the threat of danger is clearly documented, such as it is in regard to the use of marijuana, then the fool may no longer rely on the heavenly Guardian to watch over him, no matter how many other people are doing the same.
- Some are of the opinion that Shomer Pe'sa'im Hashem applies only to situations where a person is going about his business and in its natural course runs into a situation where danger presents itself; that is where Hashem will watch over him and guard him from the posed threat of danger.
- But in situations such as ours, where the dangerous behavior is specifically engaged, the ability to rely on the Heavenly Guardian is similarly not an option

COR Declines to Certify

- *On the one hand, doctors are prescribing marijuana for treatment of a variety of serious illnesses, their associated conditions and accompanying ailments.*
- *Since there can potentially be kosher sensitive additives in an edible marijuana product such as alcohol, gelatin and oil, there is a basis for providing kosher certification so that patients affected by illness can use the edible products without kashrus concerns.*
- *Indeed, some other prominent kosher certifiers have already granted kosher certification to medicinal marijuana.*
- *On the other hand, a COR endorsement of a marijuana product may create the unintended impression that marijuana is acceptable, even for recreational use.*



- ***Furthermore, kosher certified medicinal manufacturers would inevitably be growing into kosher certified manufacturers of marijuana which include the recreational market; especially in light of Canada's decision to legalize marijuana.***
- ***At that point, it would be difficult for COR to retract certification over a perfectly legal business decision that the company made because it appears unethical to our rabbis.***
- ***Finally, once edible medicinal marijuana products are available online or over the counter, they are bound to be abused and used for recreational purposes.***
- ***For these reasons, coupled with the fact that patients who are prescribed medicinal marijuana have non-edible options such as pills, capsules, or even edible options in pure cannabis oils which are inherently kosher, it was decided to decline all requests for COR certification.***

CBD vs. THC

- CBD and THC are two types of cannabinoids found in cannabis. They both have an impact on cannabinoid type 1 (CB1) receptors in the brain.
- However, the type of impact tells you a lot about why they produce such different results.
- THC activates these receptors. This causes a euphoria or the high associated with marijuana.
- CBD, on the other hand, is a CB1 antagonist. It blocks any intoxicating impact caused by the CB1 receptors. Taking CBD with THC may inhibit the effects of THC.
- In other words, CBD may block the high effects.

Health uses and effects of CBD

- Can reduce some symptoms of anxiety and depression.
- Ease inflammation and pain.
- The Food and Drug Administration approved the first CBD-based drug, for treating epileptic seizures in 2018.
- CBD has also shown promise as a way for doctors to help people with schizophrenia avoid side effects of antipsychotic medication.

Health uses and effects of THC

- pain
- muscle spasticity
- glaucoma
- insomnia
- low appetite
- nausea
- anxiety

Medicinal Use

- It is permissible for marijuana to be prescribed by a doctor for a patient to treat a specific ailment.
- Medicinal use of marijuana is not permitted unless it is prescribed by a licensed medical practitioner.
- The idea that a doctor requires a license to practice is a Torah precept.
- Since there are obvious dangers involved in the practice of medicine and the prescription of drugs, only someone who is licensed can practice it.
- Someone who is not licensed, including the patient himself, should not determine when an otherwise dangerous substance can be taken.

Rav Eliezer Waldenberg (Teshuvot Tzitz Eliezer 13:87)

- Specifically permits administering morphine to a very sick patient despite the risk involved (morphine depresses the respiratory system).
- For a very ill patient, extreme pain may hasten death.
- Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (cited in Shmirat Shabbat KeHilchata 32: footnote 150) suggests that it is permitted to administer morphine on Shabbat because great pain may endanger the patient (recall that we are permitted to violate Torah prohibitions on Shabbat only to save a life, but not merely to eliminate pain).

Wine & Alcohol

- **Tehillim 104:** “Wine gladdens the heart of man”
- **Talmud Eruvin 65:** “Wine was created so as to console mourners and to give the wicked their reward in this world so that they may get their full punishment in the World to Come”
- **Tana D’bei Eliyahu (Zuta):** “Wine gives pleasure to old people, makes their hearts happy, refreshes their souls, and illuminates their eyes.”
- **Talmud Eruvin:** Wine has a positive effect on the brain and the thinking process.
- **Midrash in Bereishis Rabba (36:4):** “wine caused exile and will continue [to do so] in future generations.”
- **Midrash in Bamidbar Rabba:** “Do not drink, for its end is blood.”
- **Talmud Gittin 70a:** “Eight things are harmful in abundance and beneficial in moderation...wine.”

Rambam - 1

- When a person eats, drinks, and celebrates on a festival, he should not let himself become overly drawn to drinking wine, mirth, and levity, saying, "whoever indulges in these activities more is increasing [his observance of] the mitzvah of rejoicing." For drunkenness, profuse mirth, and levity are not rejoicing; they are frivolity and foolishness.
- And we were not commanded to indulge in frivolity or foolishness, but rather in rejoicing that involves the service of the Creator of all existence. Thus, [Deuteronomy 28:47] states, "Because you did not serve God, Your Lord, with happiness and a glad heart with an abundance of prosperity." This teaches us that service [of God] involves joy. And it is impossible to serve God while in the midst of levity, frivolity, or drunkenness.

Rambam - 2

- When a wise man drinks wine, he drinks only enough to soften the food in his stomach.
- Whoever becomes drunk is a sinner, is shameful, and will lose his wisdom. If he becomes drunk before the common people, he desecrates God's Name.
- It is forbidden to drink even a small quantity of wine in the afternoon hours, unless it is taken together with food. Drink that is taken together with food is not intoxicating. Only wine that is taken after the meal is to be avoided.

Health Benefits of Red Wine

1. Gut microbiome & cardiovascular health
2. Raising levels of omega -3 fatty acids
3. Heart Health and type -2 diabetes
4. Healthy blood vessels & blood pressure
5. Brain damage after stroke
6. preventing Vision Loss
7. Preventing colon cancer
8. Preventing breast cancer
9. Improving lung function & preventing lung cancer
10. Protection from prostate cancer
11. Preventing dementia
12. Reducing Risk of depression.

Negative effects

- 1.Cancer - Increases the risk of cancer in the liver, pancreas, mouth, pharynx, larynx and esophagus.**
- 2.Fetal Alcohol Syndrome - Causes physical and behavioral abnormalities in the fetus.**
- 3.Heart Disease - Raises blood pressure, blood lipids and the risk of stroke and heart disease in heavy drinkers. Heart disease is generally lower in light to moderate drinkers.**
- 4.Kidney Disease- Enlarges the kidneys, alters hormone functions, and increases the risk of kidney failure.**
- 5.Liver Disease - Causes fatty liver, alcoholic hepatitis and cirrhosis.**
- 6.Malnutrition- Increases the risk of protein-energy malnutrition; low intakes of protein, calcium, iron, vitamin A, vitamin C, thiamine, vitamin B6 and riboflavin, and impaired absorption of calcium, phosphorus, vitamin D and zinc.**
- 7.Nervous Disorders - Causes neuropathy and dementia; impairs balance and memory.**
- 8.Psychological Disturbances - Causes depression, anxiety and insomnia.**

OU CALLS FOR END TO KIDDUSH CLUBS

LEADERS OF THE ORTHODOX UNION have called on all synagogues to completely eliminate Kiddush Clubs. This nationwide initiative will be launched on **Shabbat Parshat Mishpatim, February 5, 2005**. Recent years, says the OU, have seen the growth of these “clubs,” in which congregants leave shul during the *haftarah* reading to make Kiddush, often on hard liquor.

Citing the negative impact on synagogue services that these clubs have, the OU points out that the synagogue serves as a *mikdash me’at*—a place for prayer and *kedusha*, sanctity. Any behavior that detracts from the *kedushat beit haknesset* is insulting to the entire congregation.

These clubs also have a harmful influence on young people, because of their idealization of alcohol. This is particularly disturbing, says the OU, because it is emblematic of the larger dangers of alcohol consumption and substance abuse in our community.

Rabbis have responded enthusiastically to the OU’s call, echoing the urgent need to restore dignity to the shul and to combat the abuse of liquor and other substances. Indeed, the OU intends to widen the campaign in the near future to include “**Safe Homes, Safe Shuls, Safe Schools.**”

The Orthodox Union is assisting synagogues by providing educational materials, workshops, scholars-in-residence, and other programming to creatively and comprehensively address these issues.

As Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb, Executive Vice President of the Orthodox Union, has put it, “Since the influences of the world around us inevitably invade our *dalet amot*—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.”

More information can be obtained from the Orthodox Union by calling 212.613.8225 or emailing: safeshuls@ou.org.



Orthodox Union

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The Lubavitcher Rebbe limited drinking at farbrengens (until the age of 40) to 3-4 small shot glasses of drink that all together, add up to a revi'it (about 4 ounces).

Purim

- Talmud Megillah (7b): 'MeiChayav Inish Livesumei B'Puraya ad d'lo yada bein Arur Haman L'Boruch Mordechai' - a person is obligated to drink and get intoxicated on Purim until he cannot tell the difference between 'Cursed is Haman' and 'Blessed is Mordechai'.
- The simple meaning is seemingly teaching us that we must get exceedingly drunk on Purim.

Ad Delo Yada

1. One **is required** to get so drunk on Purim that he cannot tell the difference between 'Cursed is Haman' and 'Blessed is Mordechai', implying quite drunk.
2. Drinking until one can no longer perform the mental acrobatics necessary to be able to add up the Gematria of Arur Haman and Baruch Mordechai (they both equal 502!).
3. Drinking until one can no longer decide which was a greater miracle: the downfall of Haman or Mordechai's meteoric rise in prominence.

Reasons to Drink

1. **Avudraham:** The story of the *megalith* was influenced by wine. *Vashti* was removed from her role as queen through drinking of wine. *Esther* took her place through a party. So too the fall of *Haman* was through wine. Therefore, we drink on *Purim* to remember that the miracles happened to the Jews through wine.
2. **The Chasam Sofer:** the Jews in the time of *Achashveirosh* attended his *seuda* and got drunk. Therefore, we have a *mitzvah* to drink to rectify the *aveirah* which was committed at that time,
3. **Harav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach:** *Purim* was established during the time of *golus* and it is not possible to be joyous while we are in *golus*. Therefore, we drink to forget about the fact that we are in *golus* and then we can be joyous properly.
4. **Harav Moshe Shternbuch:** A sober person is aware of his true feelings and his surroundings, and uses his intellect to hide his feelings. When he is drunk and has no control over his intellect, he cannot hide his feeling, and his true essence emerges. Even without our intellect, we should be close to the *Torah* and choose the good.

The Halacha

1. **Shulchan Aruch:** One must get drunk, i.e. one should merely drink a tad more than he is accustomed to - and not 'get wasted'.
2. **Rambam:** One must drink until he falls asleep. (Meaning, if one drinks and then falls asleep he has fulfilled his Mitzvah of drinking on Purim "*ad d'lo yada*" without actually getting drunk. When asleep, one certainly cannot distinguish between *Arur Haman* and *Baruch Mordechai*!)
3. **Rama:** combines both of the latter approaches: drinking somewhat more than one is accustomed to regularly, and then going to sleep.

Contemporary Rulings:

- Many rule like the Rama of drinking somewhat more than one is accustomed to regularly, and then going to sleep.
- Many rule to drink until “Ad Demo Yada” - to get high, but not wasted.
- If one might come to be lax in the performance of even one other Mitzvah, such as *Netillas Yadayim*, *Bentching* or *Davening* while drunk, they all maintain that it is preferable **not to drink at all**

Rav Shmuel Kamenetsky

Philadelphia Rosh Teshiva

- “Heaven forbid that our Torah would consider getting drunk to be a mitzvah!” The word l’besumei is derived from the root word which means to sniff something – and said that this means that one should have only “a whiff” of drinking (wine only; he was clear to state).
- “ad deloi yoda bein arur Haman l’baruch Mordechai” means that when one sings verses of a song when he is in a heightened state of simcha (joy) he occasionally will sing the verses in incorrect order – meaning that he will sing the verse of Arur Haman in the place of the verse of Baruch Mordechai.
- “It is inconceivable, that this is to be taken to condone drunkenness – which is in direct contrast to the teachings of our Torah.”



Rav Yitzchak Hutner
(1906-1980)
Rosh Yeshiva of
Yeshiva Chaim
Berlin in Brooklyn

God put into food a power of sustenance, which strengthens the body and the mind. However, he invested wine with the ability to strengthen the power of imagination...



- When people learn together, they connect with their minds.
- When they pray together, they connect with their hearts.
- When they eat together, they connect on the physical level.
- But when they drink together, they connect via their imagination.
- Sitting and drinking at the Purim feast means “Let us fantasize together.”
- Fantasizing together is a completely unique category, for fantasy is in itself a connector, it is the power of the imagination.

- By means of the imagination, one's mind affects one's senses, and one's senses reflects one's mind.
- It is only in our imagination that we can become one with our brother.
- Now, while every person has their own power of imagination that connects their mind and their emotions, today (on Purim), we connect together and become one. Gevalt, our drinking brings us higher!