

Drinking, Drunkenness and Intoxicants

By

Yochanan Zaquantov

When you hear about drinking strong drink or wine you elicit several of different reactions. One is that it is wrong to drink or consume alcohol. The other is that it is all right to consume alcohol but not get drunk. Then another is that one may drink and get drunk is all right. Some will say it is not drinking but the over indulgence to the point that drinking is a replacement for worship of Yehovah. Still there are other intoxicant's today that were not even addressed in Tanakh, how do we handle these? Today we will look at what the Tanakh says and what we can learn from it on handling these.

The first word in Hebrew we will focus on today is Sava' (Samech-Bet-Aleph) that is reference number 5433. It is a verb. This is found in the NEHC on page 864. This leads into the classic verse that most use to say one should not get drunk with alcohol.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 21:20 (18-20)

18 If a man has a wayward and defiant son, who does not heed his father or mother and does not obey them even after they discipline him, **19** his father and mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his town at the public place of his community. **20** They shall say to the elders of his town, "This son of ours is disloyal and defiant; he does not heed us. He is a glutton **and a drunkard** (vesove וְסוֹבֵא)."

We see that the word here is translated as drunkard. It seems to indicate with the word for glutton on whose focus is not on a casual usage but a focus on it.

Yeshayahu/Isaiah 56:12

12 "Come, I'll get some wine; Let us **swill liquor** (venis'ba;ah shekhar וְנִסְבְּאָה שִׁכָּר). And tomorrow will be just the same, Or even much grander!"

Here we see that again the idea here is that one is making the wine or strong drink the focus of their lives. They only look forward to it.

Mishlei/ Proverbs 23:20-21

20 Do not be of those who **guzzle** (basov'ey בְּסוֹבְאֵי) wine, Or glut themselves on meat;

21 For **guzzlers** (sove סֹבְאִים) and gluttons will be impoverished, And drowsing will clothe you in tatters.

Again here we see used with overeating to a focus on drinking to the point that it is the focus of what we do.

Yehez'qel/Ezekiel 23:42

42 And the noise of a carefree multitude was there, of numerous men brought drunk from the desert; and they put bracelets on their arms and splendid crowns upon their heads.

Here the drinking made the men focused of trivial things.

Nahum 1:10

10 For like men besotted with drink, They are burned up like tangled thorns, Like straw that is thoroughly dried.

When drinking is the focus men cannot stand up to the challenge.

Sava' (Samech-Bet-Aleph) that is reference number 5433. It is a noun masculine. This is found in the NEHC on page 865.

Yehez'qel/Ezekiel 23:42

42 And the noise of a carefree multitude was there, of numerous men brought **drunk** (savaim/sovaim סֹבְאִים / סֹבְאִים) from the desert; and they put bracelets on their arms and splendid crowns upon their heads.

Sove' (Samech-Bet-Aleph) that is reference number 5435. It is a noun masculine. This is found in the NEHC on page 865.

Hosea 4:18

18 They drink (sav'am סֹבְאִים) to excess—Their liquor turns against them. They “love” beyond measure—Disgrace is the “gift”

The focus here is not on Yehovah but on the pleasure they can find each day. They serve the alcohol they drink.

Nah 1:10

10 For like men besotted with drink (ukhasav'am וְכִסְּבָאִם), They are burned up like tangled thorns, Like straw that is thoroughly dried.

So we see that the word is used for a drunk person. A person who continually drinks to excess.

Shakar (Shin-Kaf-Resh), which is reference number 7937. It is a verb. It is found on Page 1261 in the NEHC.

Yeshayahu/Isaiah 29:9

9 Act stupid and be stupefied! Act blind and be blinded! (They are drunk (shakh'ru שְׁכָרוּ), but not from wine, They stagger, but not from liquor.)

These men act like drunken men but are not drunk. It shows us that one whose focus is on drinking becomes blinded or loss of focus. This very similar to alcoholism where the only focus is the next drink not anything else.

Haggai 1:6

6 You have sowed much and brought in little; you eat without being satisfied; you drink (lashakh'rah לַשְׁכָּרָה) without getting your fill; you clothe yourselves, but no one gets warm; and he who earns anything earns it for a leaky purse.

The drink one does will not fill them.

Yermiyahu/Jeremiah 25:27

27 Say to them: "Thus said Yehovah of Hosts, the God of Israel: Drink and get drunk (vashikh'ru וְשִׁכְרוּ) and vomit; fall and never rise again, because of the sword that I send among you."

Here we see that he tells them to focus on their desire. Then end result is he will destroy them.

Bereshit/Genesis 9:21

20 Noah, the tiller of the soil, was the first to plant a vineyard. 21 He drank of the wine and became drunk (vayish'kar וַיִּשְׁכַּר), and he uncovered himself within his tent.

Here we see after Noach had been on dry earth he grew wine and drank till he got drunk. Nowhere does it condemn this action. We know that Noach was considered righteous in

his generation so if there was to be a condemnation for getting drunk then it should be here. The condemnation seems to happen with those instances when one drinks to excess often.

Bereshit/Genesis 43:34

34 Portions were served them from his table; but Benjamin's portion was several times that of anyone else. **And they drank** (**vayish'karu וַיִּשְׁכְּרוּ**) their fill with him.

Here they drank their fill. When one drinks their fill it normally means the reach drunkenness.

Lamentations 4:21

21 Rejoice and exult, Fair Edom, Who dwell in the land of Uz! To you, too, the cup shall pass, **You shall get drunk** (**tish'kariy תִּשְׁכְּרִי**) and expose your nakedness.

Here we see it used as a metaphor for one letting ones guard down when drinking.

Nahum 3:11

11 **You too shall be drunk** (**tish'kariy תִּשְׁכְּרִי**) And utterly overcome; You too shall seek A refuge from the enemy.

Again, a metaphor for being overcome when drunk.

Shemu'el Bet/2 Samuel 11:13

13 David summoned him, and he ate and drank with him until **he got him drunk** (**vay'shak'rehu וַיִּשְׁכְּרֵהוּ**); but in the evening, [Uriah] went out to sleep in the same place, with his lord's officers; he did not go down to his home.

Here we see Melekh David drinking with Uriah till drunk. The idea was he would go home to his wife. This did not happen.

Shemu'el Aleph/I Samuel 1:13-14

13 Now Hannah was praying in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice could not be heard. So Eli thought **she was drunk** (**lashikorah לְשִׁכּוֹרָה**). 14 Eli said to her, "How long will you make a drunken spectacle of yourself? Sober up!"

Eli mistook Hannah for being drunk. It was not a good thing to come to the temple in that state.

Shekar (Shin-Kaf-Resh), which is reference number 7941. It is a Masculine Noun and found on page 1262 of the NEHC.

Vayiqra/Leviticus 10:9

8 And Yehovah spoke to Aaron, saying: 9 Drink no wine **or other intoxicant** (**veshekhar וְשֵׁכָר**), you or your sons, when you enter the Tent of Meeting, that you may not die. This is a law for all time throughout the ages,

The Kohen were restricted from drinking while they served in the Tent of Meeting/Appointment. This appears as a direct result of Aharon's sons offering incense at the improper time.

Bamidbar/Numbers 6:3

2 Speak to the Israelites and say to them: If anyone, man or woman, explicitly utters a nazirite's vow, to set himself apart for Yehovah, 3 he shall abstain from wine **and any other intoxicant** (**veshekhar וְשֵׁכָר**); he shall not drink vinegar of wine or of any other **intoxicant** (**Shekhar שֵׁכָר**), neither shall he drink anything in which grapes have been steeped, nor eat grapes fresh or dried.

The Nazir was to set them selves apart and not just abstain from drink but all things from grapes.

Bamidbar/Numbers 28:7

7 The libation with it shall be a quarter of a *hin* for each lamb, to be poured in the sacred precinct as an offering of **fermented drink** (**shekhar שֵׁכָר**) to Yehovah.

Besides yayin or wine, strong drink was also offered as a poured libation offering.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 14:26

24 Should the distance be too great for you, should you be unable to transport them, because the place where Yehovah your God has chosen to establish His name is far from you and because Yehovah your God has blessed you, 25 you may convert them into money. Wrap up the money and take it with you to the place that Yehovah your God has chosen, 26 and spend the money on anything you want—cattle, sheep, wine, **or other intoxicant** (**ubashekhar וּבִשְׁכָר**), or anything you may desire. And you shall feast there, in the presence of Yehovah your God, and rejoice with your household.

Here we see that it is permissible to drink and even use the festival tithe and buy wine or strong drink. Clearly this is permission to drink alcohol.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 29:5 (4-5)

4 I led you through the wilderness forty years; the clothes on your back did not wear out, nor did the sandals on your feet; 5 you had no bread to eat and no wine **or other intoxicant** (**veshekhar וְשֵׁכָר**) to drink—that you might know that I Yehovah am your God.

During the time in the wilderness the children of Yisrael did eat bread of their own growing nor they did drink wine (from fermenting grapes) or strong drink.

Shofetim/Judges 13:4,7,14

3 An angel of Yehovah appeared to the woman and said to her, “You are barren and have borne no children; but you shall conceive and bear a son. 4 Now be careful not to drink wine **or other intoxicant** (**veshekhar וְשֵׁכָר**), or to eat anything unclean. 5 For you are going to conceive and bear a son; let no razor touch his head, for the boy is to be a nazirite to God from the womb on. He shall be the first to deliver Israel from the Philistines.”

6 The woman went and told her husband, “A man of God came to me; he looked like an angel of God, very frightening. I did not ask him where he was from, nor did he tell me his name. 7 He said to me, ‘You are going to conceive and bear a son. Drink no wine **or other intoxicant** (**veshekhar וְשֵׁכָר**), and eat nothing unclean, for the boy is to be a nazirite to God from the womb to the day of his death!’”

8 Manoah pleaded with Yehovah. “Oh, my Lord!” he said, “please let the man of God that You sent come to us again, and let him instruct us how to act with the child that is to be born.” 9 God heeded Manoah’s plea, and the angel of God came to the woman again. She was sitting in the field and her husband Manoah was not with her. 10 The woman ran in haste to tell her husband. She said to him, “The man who came to me before has just appeared to me.” 11 Manoah promptly followed his wife. He came to the man and asked him: “Are you the man who spoke to my wife?” “Yes,” he answered. 12 Then Manoah said, “May your words soon come true! What rules shall be observed for the boy?” 13 The angel of Yehovah said to Manoah, “The woman must abstain from all the things against which I warned her. 14 She must not eat anything that comes from the grapevine, or drink wine **or other intoxicant** (**veshekhar וְשֵׁכָר**), or eat anything unclean. She must observe all that I commanded her.”

Here the mother of Samson/Shimson was to not eat or drink any grape product including yayin/wine and strong drink.

Shemu’el Aleph/1 Samuel 1:15

10 In her wretchedness, she prayed to Yehovah, weeping all the while. 11 And she made this vow: “Yehovah of Hosts, if You will look upon the suffering of Your maidservant and will remember me and not forget Your maidservant, and if You will grant Your maidservant a male child, I will dedicate him to Yehovah for all the days of his life; and no razor shall ever touch his head.”

12 As she kept on praying before Yehovah, Eli watched her mouth. 13 Now Hannah was praying in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice could not be heard. So Eli thought she was drunk. 14 Eli said to her, “How long will you make a drunken spectacle of yourself? Sober up!” 15 And Hannah replied, “Oh no, my lord! I am a very unhappy woman. I have drunk no wine **or other strong drink (veshekhar וְשֵׁכָר)**, but I have been pouring out my heart to Yehovah. 16 Do not take your maidservant for a worthless woman; I have only been speaking all this time out of my great anguish and distress.” 17 “Then go in peace,” said Eli, “and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of Him.”

Here Hannah was dedicating Shemu’el to service in the Tent of Meeting. Eli thought she was a drunk but she was not.

Tehillim/Psalms 69:12 (13)

13 Those who sit in the gate talk about me; I am the taunt of **drunkards (shekhar שֵׁכָר)**.

The drinking to excess can make men have looser tongues.

Mishlei/Proverbs 20:1

1 Wine is a scoffer, **strong drink (shekhar שֵׁכָר)** a roisterer; He who is muddled by them will not grow wise.

In the wisdom literature, we see that a focus on wine and strong drink will make a person not able to gain wisdom.

Mishlei/Proverbs 31:4,6

1 The words of Lemuel, king of Massa, with which his mother admonished him:

2 No, my son! No, O son of my womb! No, O son of my vows!

3 Do not give your strength to women, Your vigor, to those who destroy kings.

4 Wine is not for kings, O Lemuel; Not for kings to drink, Nor any **strong drink (shekhar שֵׁכָר)** for princes,

5 Lest they drink and forget what has been ordained, And infringe on the rights of the poor.

6 Give **strong drink** (**shekhar** שֶׁכָּר) to the hapless And wine to the embittered.

7 Let them drink and forget their poverty, And put their troubles out of mind.

Wine or intoxicants can make one forget their responsibilities. That is when the focus their mind on drinking. Yet, it can help those whose troubles are many by this.

Yeshayahu/Isaiah 5:11, 22

11 Ah, Those who chase **liquor** (**shekhar** שֶׁכָּר) From early in the morning, And till late in the evening Are inflamed by wine! 12 Who, at their banquets, Have lyre and lute, Timbrel, flute, and wine; But who never give a thought To the plan of Yehovah, And take no note Of what He is designing.

This is a perfect illustration of what we have been alluding to in the verses before. The over indulgence of alcohol is what is the focus of drunkenness in that Tanakh.

22 Ah, Those who are so doughty—As drinkers of wine, And so valiant—As mixers of **drink** (**shekhar** שֶׁכָּר)!

Yeshayahu/Isaiah 28:7

7 But these are also muddled by wine And dazed by **liquor** (**ubashekhar** וּבַשֶּׁכָּר): Priest and prophet Are muddled by **liquor** (**bashekhar** בַּשֶּׁכָּר); They are confused by wine, They are dazed by **liquor** (**min hashekhar** מִן־הַשֶּׁכָּר); They are muddled in their visions, They stumble in judgment.

When one is focused on wine and strong drink they do not judge well.

Shikkur (Shin-Kaf-Resh), which is reference number 7943. It is a Masculine Noun and found on page 1262 of the NEHC. Also in BDB on page 1016.

Shemu'el Aleph/I Samuel 1:13

13 Now Hannah was praying in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice could not be heard. So Eli thought **she was drunk** (**leshikkorah** לְשִׁכּוֹרָה).

Shemu'el Aleph/I Samuel 25:36

36 When Abigail came home to Nabal, he was having a feast in his house, a feast fit for a king; Nabal was in a merry mood and **very drunk** (**shikkir** שִׁכְּוֹר), so she did not tell

him anything at all until daybreak. 37 The next morning, when Nabal had slept off the wine, his wife told him everything that had happened; and his courage died within him, and he became like a stone. 38 About ten days later Yehovah struck Nabal and he died.

Here we see that while drunk he was very happy.

Melekhim Aleph/I Kings 16:9, 20

8 In the twenty-sixth year of King Asa of Judah, Elah son of Baasha became king over Israel, at Tirzah—for two years. 9 His officer Zimri, commander of half the chariotry, committed treason against him while he was at Tirzah **drinking himself drunk (shikkor שִׁכּוֹר)** in the house of Arza, who was in charge of the palace at Tirzah. 10 Zimri entered, struck him down, and killed him; he succeeded him as king in the twenty-seventh year of King Asa of Judah.

The King being drunk was not able to defend himself.

Yoel/Joel 1:5

5 Wake up, **you drunkards (shikkorim שִׁכּוֹרִים)**, and weep, Wail, all you swillers of wine—For the new wine that is denied you!

Ok we see that drinking and strong drink are used for good and bad. Both appear to show negative aspects as well as permission to drink strong drink. The overall condemnation appears to be for indulgence of drink that overrides the worship of Yehovah. There is nothing particularly wrong with drinking or being drunk as long as it does not become a focus to the person. What would that be like today? Alcoholism is one way. It is an addiction to alcohol in a way that nothing but the drink matters. You will see those who have this problem hold up gaining the drink as paramount to their daily lives more than evening sustenance or worship of Yehovah. That is what I believe the Tanakh is referring to.

What about Yayin or Wine?

Yayin (Yod-Yod-Nun) and its reference number 3196.

Bereshit/Genesis 9:21, 24

20 Noah, the tiller of the soil, was the first to plant a vineyard. 21 He drank **of the wine (min hayayin מִן־הַיַּיִן)** and became drunk, and he uncovered himself within his tent.

Now we know that Yehovah was recounting to Moshe this event. If Wine drinking to the point of passing out was wrong would not he have told us here.

Bereshit/Genesis 14:18

18 And King Melchizedek of Salem brought out bread **and wine** (vayayin וַיַּיִן); he was a priest of God Most High.

Wine was one of the intoxicants most used in the Tanakh.

Bereshit/Genesis 27:25

22 So Jacob drew close to his father Isaac, who felt him and wondered. “The voice is the voice of Jacob, yet the hands are the hands of Esau.” 23 He did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like those of his brother Esau; and so he blessed him. 24 He asked, “Are you really my son Esau?” And when he said, “I am,” 25 he said, “Serve me and let me eat of my son’s game that I may give you my innermost blessing.” So he served him and he ate, and he brought him **wine** (yayin יַיִן) and he drank.

Even at mealtime Wine was used.

Vayiqra/Leviticus 10:9

8 And Yehovah spoke to Aaron, saying: 9 Drink no **wine** (yayin יַיִן) or other intoxicant, you or your sons, when you enter the Tent of Meeting, that you may not die. This is a law for all time throughout the ages, 10 for you must distinguish between the sacred and the profane, and between the unclean and the clean; 11 and you must teach the Israelites all the laws which Yehovah has imparted to them through Moses.

Here we see that the Kohenim were not to consume any intoxicant while in his duties in the Mish’kan.

Bamidbar/Numbers 6:3

2 Speak to the Israelites and say to them: If anyone, man or woman, explicitly utters a nazirite’s vow, to set himself apart for Yehovah, 3 he shall abstain **from wine** (miyayin מִיַּיִן) and any other intoxicant; he shall not drink vinegar of **wine** (Yayin יַיִן) or of any other intoxicant, neither shall he drink anything in which grapes have been steeped, nor eat grapes fresh or dried. 4 Throughout his term as nazirite, he may not eat anything that is obtained from the grapevine, even seeds or skin.

The Nazir was not to eat nothing grape or derived from grapes which includes wine.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 29:4-5

4 I led you through the wilderness forty years; the clothes on your back did not wear out, nor did the sandals on your feet; 5 you had no bread to eat and no **wine** (**veyayin** [וַיַּיִן]) or other intoxicant to drink—that you might know that I Yehovah am your God.

The Children of Yisrael did not consume wine or intoxicant for 40 years in the wilderness.

Shemu'el Aleph/I Samuel 16:20

20 Jesse took an ass [laden with] bread, a skin of **wine** (**yayin** [יַיִן]), and a kid, and sent them to Saul by his son David.

David's father sent wine with other provisions to King Saul.

Shemu'el Aleph/I Samuel 25:18

18 Abigail quickly got together two hundred loaves of bread, two jars of **wine** (**yayin** [יַיִן]), five dressed sheep, five *seahs* of parched corn, one hundred cakes of raisin, and two hundred cakes of pressed figs. She loaded them on asses,

Avigail sent provisions which included wine.

Ester/Esther 1:7,10

7 Royal **wine** (**yayin** [יַיִן]) was served in abundance, as befits a king, in golden beakers, beakers of varied design. 8 And the rule for the drinking was, "No restrictions!" For the king had given orders to every palace steward to comply with each man's wishes.

10 On the seventh day, when the king was merry **with wine** (**bayayin** [בַּיַּיִן]), he ordered Mehuman, Bizzetha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, the seven eunuchs in attendance on King Ahasuerus,

Here we see that in Persia the account of Ester states that they drank with no restriction. This however, does not mean that it was ok it was noted that they did it.

Ester/Esther 5:6

5 The king commanded, "Tell Haman to hurry and do Esther's bidding." So the king and Haman came to the feast that Esther had prepared.

6 At the **wine (hayayin חַיַּיִן)** feast, the king asked Esther, “What is your wish? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to half the kingdom, it shall be fulfilled.”

Another wine feast like before? It does not say only that it was a wine feast which wine was the main focus.

Ester/Esther 7:2,7

1 So the king and Haman came to feast with Queen Esther. 2 On the second day, the king again asked Esther at the **wine (hayayin חַיַּיִן)** feast, “What is your wish, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to half the kingdom, it shall be fulfilled.”

7 The king, in his fury, left the **wine (hayayin חַיַּיִן)** feast for the palace garden, while Haman remained to plead with Queen Esther for his life; for he saw that the king had resolved to destroy him.

Another wine feast like before? It does not say only that it was a wine buffet which wine was the main focus.

Tehillim/Psalms 104:15

14 You make the grass grow for the cattle, and herbage for man’s labor that he may get food out of the earth—15 **wine (veyayin וַיַּיִן)** that cheers the hearts of men oil that makes the face shine, and bread that sustains man’s life.

In the psalms we are told that wine has beneficial qualities.

Mishlei/Proverbs 21:17

17 He who loves pleasure comes to want; He who loves **wine (yayin יַיִן)** and oil does not grow rich.

If your focus is on wine then that is what you will spend your money.

Mishlei/Proverbs 23:20, 30, 31

20 Do not be of those who guzzle **wine (yayin יַיִן)**, Or glut themselves on meat;

21 For guzzlers and gluttons will be impoverished, And drowsing will clothe you in tatters.

Overdoing drinking wine and eating meat will undo you and make you poor.

30 Those whom **wine (hayayin חַיַּיִן)** keeps till the small hours, Those who gather to drain the cups.

31 Do not ogle that red **wine (yayin יַיִן)** As it lends its color to the cup, As it flows on smoothly;

32 In the end, it bites like a snake; It spits like a basilisk. 33 Your eyes will see strange sights; Your heart will speak distorted things. 34 You will be like one lying in bed on high seas, Like one lying on top of the rigging.

The effects of over use of wine or other intoxicants.

Mishlei/Proverbs 31:4,6

4 **Wine (yayin יַיִן)** is not for kings, O Lemuel; Not for kings to drink, Nor any strong drink for princes, 5 Lest they drink and forget what has been ordained, And infringe on the rights of the poor. 6 Give strong drink to the hapless **And wine (veyayin וַיַּיִן)** to the embittered. 7 Let them drink and forget their poverty, And put their troubles out of mind.

In Proverbs/Mishlei, it seems to condone drinking to forget trouble and to enliven the heart.

Kohelet/Ecclesiastes 2:3

2:1 I said to myself, “Come, I will treat you to merriment. Taste mirth!” That too, I found, was futile. 2 Of revelry I said, “It’s mad!” Of merriment, “What good is that?”

3 I ventured to tempt my flesh **with wine (bayayin בַּיַּיִן)**, and to grasp folly, while letting my mind direct with wisdom, to the end that I might learn which of the two was better for men to practice in their few days of life under heaven.

Here we see that King Solomon tried out many things to understand its wisdom.

Kohelet/Ecclesiastes 9:7

4 For he who is reckoned among the living has something to look forward to—even a live dog is better than a dead lion—5 since the living know they will die. But the dead know nothing; they have no more recompense, for even the memory of them has died. 6 Their loves, their hates, their jealousies have long since perished; and they have no more share till the end of time in all that goes on under the sun. 7 Go, eat your bread in gladness, and drink **your wine (yeynekha יַיִן נְכַחְךָ)** in joy; for your action was long ago approved by God.

Here we see that King Solomon tells us we should enjoy our food and wine while we live since this was given to by Elohim.

Kohelet/Ecclesiastes 10:19

17 Happy are you, O land whose king is a master and whose ministers dine at the proper time—with restraint, not with guzzling! 18 Through slothfulness the ceiling sags, Through lazy hands the house caves in. 19 They make a banquet for revelry; **wine (veyayin יַיִן)** makes life merry, and money answers every need.

Wine makes life merrier. It gives us pleasure.

Yermiyahu/Jeremiah 35:2,5,6,8,14

2 Go to the house of the Rechabites and speak to them, and bring them to the House of Yehovah, to one of the chambers, and give them **wine (yayin יַיִן)** to drink

5 I set bowls full of **wine (yayin יַיִן)** and cups before the men of the house of the Rechabites, and said to them, “Have some **wine (yayin יַיִן)**.”

6 They replied, “We will not drink **wine (yayin יַיִן)**, for our ancestor, Jonadab son of Rechab, commanded us: ‘You shall never drink **wine (yayin יַיִן)**, either you or your children.

8 And we have obeyed our ancestor Jonadab son of Rechab in all that he commanded us: we never drink **wine (yayin יַיִן)**, neither we nor our wives nor our sons and daughters.

14 The commands of Jonadab son of Rechab have been fulfilled: he charged his children not to drink **wine (yayin יַיִן)**, and to this day they have not drunk, in obedience to the charge of their ancestor. But I spoke to you persistently, and you did not listen to Me.

Here we see a group whose ancestor was a man who directed them to never drink wine. The matter is not drink here but the obedience of the children.

Yehez'qel/Ezekiel 44:21

21 No priest shall drink **wine (veyayin יַיִן)** when he enters into the inner court.

Here this reminds us that in Torah the Priest was not to drink wine in the Mish'kan also applies to the temple inner court..

So are there other intoxicant's in the Tanakh.

Mandrake or duday (1736) is a plant which was highly desired and whether right or wrong was thought to help barren women conceive. It is defined as the following in Webster's dictionary.

“1 a: a Mediterranean herb (*Mandragora officinarum*) of the nightshade family with large ovate leaves, greenish-yellow or purple flowers, and a large usually forked root resembling a human in form and formerly credited with magical properties b: the root of a mandrake formerly used especially to promote conception, as a cathartic, or as a narcotic and soporific.” <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/mandrakes>

Here we see that it is a narcotic or drug. It was know in small amounts to be a hallucinogen. We find this in two places in the Tanakh.

Shir HaShirim/Sons of the Songs 7:14

14 The mandrakes (haduda'im **הַדּוּדָאִים**) yield their fragrance, At our doors are all choice fruits; Both freshly picked and long-stored Have I kept, my beloved, for you.

Bereshit/Genesis 30:14-16

14 Once, at the time of the wheat harvest, Reuben came upon some mandrakes (duda'im **דּוּדָאִים**) in the field and brought them to his mother Leah. Rachel said to Leah, “Please give me some of your son's mandrakes (meduda'ey **מְדוּדָאֵי**).” 15 But she said to her, “Was it not enough for you to take away my husband, that you would also take my son's mandrakes (meduda'ey **מְדוּדָאֵי**)?” Rachel replied, “I promise, he shall lie with you tonight, in return for your son's mandrakes (meduda'ey **מְדוּדָאֵי**).”

16 When Jacob came home from the field in the evening, Leah went out to meet him and said, “You are to sleep with me, for I have hired you with my son's mandrakes (meduda'ey **מְדוּדָאֵי**).” And he lay with her that night.

Whether she wanted them for help with becoming pregnant or some other purpose we know that its effects were that of an intoxicant.

The next plant found that could have is calamus. Qaneh (7070) is the Hebrew word for this. And as found that is has narcotic effects too.

“EFFECT: A piece of 5cm (thick as a pen) is stimulating and evokes cheerful mood. A 25cm piece may lead to altered perception and hallucinations. Calamus is also an aphrodisiac, especially when used as an additive in your bathing-water.”

<http://nepenthes.lycaenum.org/Plants/Acorus/calamus.html>

Where is this found in the Tanakh.

Shemot/Exodus 30:23

22 Yehovah spoke to Moses, saying: 23 Next take choice spices: five hundred weight of solidified myrrh, half as much—two hundred and fifty—of fragrant cinnamon, two hundred and fifty of aromatic **cane (uqaneh וּקְנֵה)**, 24 five hundred—by the sanctuary weight—of cassia, and a *hin* of olive oil. 25 Make of this a sacred anointing oil, a compound of ingredients expertly blended, to serve as sacred anointing oil.

Shir HaShirim/Song of the Songs 4:14

14 Nard and saffron, **Fragrant reed (qaneh וּקְנֵה)** and cinnamon, With all aromatic woods, Myrrh and aloes—All the choice perfumes.

This is another stimulant in the Tanakh.

So if we look at plant stimulants in the world, which may have or may not have been known, which one would be ok to use and which one would not be. Many of the drugs we see today have an intoxicant ability. The way one should judge an intoxicant is whether that intoxicant is habit forming or would over time cause you to seek after it rather than do your daily tasks like worshipping Yehovah or even earning a living.

Habit-forming intoxicants are:

Capable of leading to physiological or psychological dependence: *a habit-forming drug*.

Chocolate (overuse)

Alcohol (over prolonged use)

Nicotine (over prolonged use)

Caffeine (over large amounts of use and prolonged use)

Amphetamine (Amphetamine, dextroamphetamine and methamphetamine – over prolonged use)

Cocaine (Immediately)

PCP (phencyclidine almost immediately)

Heroin (almost immediately)

Codeine (In high doses and long term use)

Marijuana (in high usages)

The point is that any thing, which causes a withdrawal effect or causes us to stop worshipping Yehovah, is something we should restrict or stay away from especially if we have a tendency to become dependant on a substance.

I am not saying one may not take an intoxicant but should be aware of what they take in and be wise in its