

# ONEG SHABBAS

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## Remembering Shabbat Over Wine: The Brilliant Rabbinic Innovation

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When we read the Ten Commandments in this week's Torah portion, there does not seem to be anything involving drinking. Yet, our sages were not satisfied with this situation. When we read of the mitzvah regarding Shabbat - זְכוֹר אֶת יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ - "Remember the sabbath day to sanctify it" (Ex. 20:8) - the sages were not satisfied with accomplishing this mitzvah with mere mental memorizing.

### Sanctifying Shabbat with Wine

As our sages commonly sought to concretize abstract mitzvot, they did so with this mitzvah of Shabbat-remembering (*Pesachim* 106a):

The Sages taught: "Remember the day of Shabbat to sanctify it" (Ex. 20:7) - Make mention of it over wine.

This indicates that it's only during the day, where is it that it should be done at night?

The verse states: "Remember the day of Shabbat to sanctify it."

תנו רבנן זכור את יום השבת לקדשו וזכרהו על היין אין לי אלא ביום בלילה מנין תלמוד לומר זכור את יום השבת לקדשו

Certainly readers of this publication will no doubt be delighted to read this text. Indeed, the rabbis sought to make sure there was weekly wine to accompany



one's sanctifying Shabbat as a way of accomplishing this commandment.

### Only Over Wine?

While the first text we encountered specified wine for the accomplishment of remembering Shabbat, does it have to be specifically wine? This was something the rabbis considered when they established this innovation (*Pesachim* 107a):

The Rabbis taught: One may not recite kiddush over beer.

From the name of Rabbi Elazar, son of Rabbi Shimon, they said: "One may sanctify [Shabbat [upon beer]]."

תנו רבנן אין מקדשין על השכר משום רבי אלעזר בר רבי שמעון אמרו מקדשין

While there was a strong and clear preference for specifically wine, there was a minority opinion that the fulfillment of this mitzvah could be accomplished through beer.



### How Did This Come About?

What is rather curious about this text is that there is no justification behind the wine being a part of this ritual. It simply seems as if it is a good idea and totally understandable. One can almost imagine being a part of that discussion:

Rabbi 1: So, how are we going to fulfill this commandment to remember Shabbat?

Rabbi 2: What do you mean? Why don't we simply just remember?

Rabbi 3: Are you kidding me? How can that actually be fulfilling a mitzvah, just by remembering?

Rabbi 1: Yeah, I hear you on that, so what do you have in mind?

Rabbi 3: Well, it's got to be a physical action.

Rabbi 2: Such as? Should we just point to the sun going down and have that count for noticing and reminding people that Shabbat is now here?

Rabbi 3: No, that's not enough; it's got to be really something noticeable.

Rabbi 4: It should probably be something that everyone has at home or can otherwise easily take part in doing, right?

Rabbi 1: Yes, we definitely want to make it something everyone has, perhaps something we could consume?

Rabbi 2: Perhaps bread?

Rabbi 4: Everyone does have that, but maybe we make it something enjoyable?

Rabbi 3: Yes, how about wine? We all enjoy wine, plus it not only is enjoyable and makes us happy.

Rabbi 1: Does it have to be wine? What about other beverages?

Rabbi 2: Like water?

Rabbi 1: Definitely not water - that's a common beverage.

Rabbi 4: How about beer?

Rabbi 2: Beer is definitely nice and enjoyable; that sounds great!

Rabbi 3: No let's just stick with wine, which is wonderful and can really elevate our Shabbat from the rest of the week.

Of course, that's simply speculative historical fiction, but who knows how it actually played out.

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### Medieval Considerations of Wine-Requirement of Shabbat-Remembering

Medieval rabbis were curious how this fulfillment works, with [one/many of the] Tosafot (12th-15th centuries) connecting other Biblical verses with regards to remembering and wine (תוספות על פסחים):

Remembering is written upon wine: "His memory will be like wine of Lebanon" (Hoshea 14:8),	זכרה כתיב על היין זכרו כיין לבנון (הושע י"ד:ח)
"Let us remember your love more than wine" (SOS 1:4)	מזכירה דודוך מין (שיר השירים א:ד)

This is certainly insightful. Ultimately, Tosafot close with an intriguing suggestion as to different aspects of Shabbat-remembering over wine:

Saying the Sanctification of the Day upon wine is a Torah matter, but saying that the blesser [of the blessings of the Sanctification of the Day] needs to taste [the wine] is a rabbinic requirement.	קידוש על היין דבר תורה אבל הא דאמר המברך צריך שיטעום זהו מדרבנן
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### Wine-Drinking as Accomplishing Shabbat-Remembering

In considering the level of this wine-drinking requirement for accomplishing the mitzvah of Shabbat-remembering, Rabbi Moses ben Maimon (1138-1204) articulates (משנה תורה, הלכות שבת כ"ט:א):

It is a prescriptive commandment from the Torah to sanctify the Sabbath day with a verbal statement, as it is said: "Remember the Sabbath day to sanctify it" (Ex. 20:8) - which is to say, remember it with [words of] praise and sanctification. This remembrance must be made at the Sabbath's entrance and at its departure: at the [day's] entrance with the kiddush that sanctifies the day, and at its departure with havdalah.	מצות עשה מן התורה לקדש את יום השבת בברבים שְׁנָאֵמַר (שמות כ ח) "זכור את יום השבת לקדשו". כלומר זכרהו זכירת שבת וקדושו. וצריך לקרהו בכניסתו וביציאתו. בקדוש היום וביציאתו בהבדלה
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While his novel inclusion of Havdallah as the other part of this mitzvah is certainly intriguing, that is a topic for a separate discussion. Nevertheless, what I do want to point out is that Maimonides considered not only wine-drinking to be a fulfillment of this mitzvah at the outset of Shabbat, but even on its conclusion, which is fascinating. Nevertheless, it becomes clear and established throughout the rest of Jewish history that drinking wine to bring in Shabbat is a fulfillment of this mitzvah.

### Remembering Shabbat Only At Night?

Can the accomplishment of Shabbat-Remembering over wine take place only at night? What happens if one was unable to fulfill this mitzvah at night? This consideration is something the rabbis considered (מכילתא דרבי שמעון בן יוחאי כ"ח):

"To sanctify it" - Sanctify it at night. Whence is it that if one had not sanctified at night, one sanctifies at any point throughout the day? You learn it from "remember the Shabbat day to sanctify it".	לקדשו. בלילה קדשו: מניין שאם לא קידש בלילה מקדש והולך כל יום תלמוד לומר זכור את יום השבת לקדשו
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While this rabbinic text points out that remembering Shabbat over wine should ideally take place at night, there are times that one is

unable to do so (perhaps a headache, one fell asleep (it could have been a long week), etc.), thus, one has all of Shabbat to accomplish this mitzvah, as it is still Shabbat.

### Fulfillment of Sanctifying Shabbat Through Drinking

Going beyond mentioning Shabbat upon wine to accomplish the remembering of Shabbat, another early rabbinic text that involves fulfilling the mitzvah in this verse through drinking is one that focuses not on the first word of the verse, but the final word (מכילתא דרבי שמעון) (בן יוחאי כ"ח):

"To sanctify it" - with what do you sanctify it? With eating, with drinking, and with clean clothes, so that your Shabbat meals are unlike your weekday meals and that your Shabbat attire is unlike your weekday attire.	לקדשו במה אתה מקדשו במאכל ובמשתה ובכסות נקיה שלא תהא סעודתך של שבת כסעודת החול ולא עטיפתך של שבת בעטיפתך בחול
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This rabbinic text considers the outcome of the accomplishing of the mitzvah - that the remembering should serve to sanctify Shabbat. What better way to sanctify Shabbat than by elevating it experientially? In this way, not only is Shabbat marked off as different, but it is substantially different from the weekday experience: better food, better drinks, and clean clothes. In this understanding, by drinking better drinks than the rest of the week, we are thereby sanctifying Shabbat. Moreover, whereas what we had read previously focused on the moment of sanctifying Shabbat at its outset of mentioning Shabbat over wine, this text also considers the experiential elevation throughout the course of Shabbat.

### Sanctification of The Day Over Wine: The Beverage Gift That Keeps on Giving

With these rabbinic articulations of fulfilling this mitzvah through drinking wine at the outset of Shabbat, one rabbi suggested that carrying out this mitzvah yields a great return on this mitzvah. Rav Huna (212-290) offered a curious suggestion (Shabbat 23b):

One who is meticulous in kiddush of the day merits and fills jugs of wine.	הזהיר בקידוש היום - זוכה וממלא גרבי יין
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Lest we be concerned about this weekly expenditure on wine for Shabbat, Rav Huna suggests that the more careful we are to spend the money to drink wine every single Friday night, we will have a fantastic return. One can certainly be concerned with the weekly expenditure on wine for the purpose of the fulfillment of this mitzvah, yet Rav Huna sought to allay our fears of simply spending resources and seemingly dwindling our resources, yet ultimately having more than we would have without fulfilling this mitzvah. While I'm not exactly sure of the mechanics of how this increase works, it certainly is encouraging for us to fulfill it.

### Conclusion

While we might not expect that the Ten Commandments have anything to do with drinking, our sages insightfully innovated the accomplishment of remembering Shabbat through mentioning Shabbat over wine. It seems they implemented this vinous innovation as a means through which to sanctify this special day. Moreover, they also encouraged us to have an overall enhanced and elevated experience through drinking nicer beverages on shabbat in order to sanctify it. Lest we be concerned that the fulfillment of this mitzvah will be a material drain on us, one rabbi suggested we will yield larger rewards through fulfilling this commandment.

L'chaim 