a rationally controlled impulse life subordinated to higher ends.”

We find a still more meaningful insight into the attitudes of the Jewish people concerning alcoholic beverages in their philosophical approach to life. Jewish ethical teachings center in the concept that “Nature is a work of God created for the purpose of aiding man in his quest for holiness, the true vocation and ideal for man. Wine as a part of this beneficial creation is therefore necessarily good and hence can be used legitimately by man.”

The numerous allusions to the vine and wine in the Old Testament furnish an admirable basis for the study of its estimation among the people at large. Wine is a gift of God and as such is used as a symbol to denote any gift of God to man. An abundance of wine was regarded as a sign of God’s special blessing and an extraordinary crop was viewed as a token of the approach of Messiah. This favorable view, however, is balanced by an unfavorable estimate. Wine is practically used as a synonym for drunkenness, and the terms of disapprobation in which drunkenness is mentioned apply equally for wine. The reason for the presence of these two conflicting opinions on the nature of wine need occasion no such anxiety as some writers have experienced. The answer is simple. The consequences of wine drinking follow its use and not its nature.

This perceptive insight by Irving Raymond reveals the essence of Jewish philosophy concerning beverage alcohol (particularly wine), and the concept of “rational control” which permeates so much of Jewish life. This concept of “rational control” emphasizes the strong value of education, deep thought, and moderation—the latter directly influencing patterns of alcohol use. To use wine excessively would, for the Jew, constitute a “personal affront to his God.” This is because in using wine excessively, “rational control” is dissipated and those things which can result—dimmed conscience, weakened will and intellect, increased forgetfulness, loss of understanding, and inability to deal with surroundings—are considered abuses of the gift of God. Such abuse constituted a deadening of the spiritual life for sure. As well, there were practical, non-spiritual implications for Jews in alien societies who lost the capacity to deal with their surroundings. Resultingly, there is a very realistic fear that the loss continued to exist in Jewish communities through the pogroms of Europe even to the problems of Jewish communities in other places today.

Traditionally, two well known Jewish communities practiced ab-

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7 Ibid., p. 49.
8 Ibid., pp. 24-25 (emphasis added by author).
9 Ibid., p. 49.
10 Ibid., p. 27.