chapter of his major book, *Alcohol and the Jews*, he indicates three variables which must be considered when evaluating alcoholism in any particular group.

1) The group incidence (or rates) of acute psychic tensions or severe needs for adjustment of the sort that probably play dynamic roles in alcoholism and which may differ widely both in content and origin;

2) The type of normative orientation toward drinking which is embedded in the culture of the group;

3) The availability of culturally defined alternate means of adjustment (whether positively sanctioned patterns or culturally typical deviations)—referring to modes other than drinking which permit partial or total satisfaction of the severe needs for adjustment which may enter into alcoholism.  

It would be simple if we could conclude that because Jews do not abuse alcohol, they are void of “group incidence of acute psychic tensions.” But we cannot draw this conclusion. We can conclude that Jews have a healthy “normative orientation toward drinking” embedded in their culture. As for the availability of culturally defined alternate means of adjustment, we can say there are a few, all of which seem to fit “culturally typical deviations” rather than “positively sanctioned patterns.”

Looking first at Snyder’s third variable, one of the most interesting theories about an alternate means of adjustment among Jews postulates that Jews substitute gambling as tension release where others (non-Jews) might choose alcohol. Adler and Goleman indicate that similar psychodynamics have been proposed for gambling and alcoholism and, in cultures where gambling is prevalent, alcoholism will seldom appear, and vice versa.

Other authors have indicated a higher proportion of opiate addiction among Jews than among the general populace. One obvious fact is that opiates do not have the same “sacred” value for the Jews as does alcohol. Abuse of drugs does not carry the same insult to God inherent in alcohol abuse. “The contrasting effects of the drugs together with cultural attitudes determine the prevalence of type of addiction.” Or as another author states:

Specifically, what the investigator in this field is trying to do is to discover how membership in a group sharing a certain culture predisposes one to a particular method of handling anxiety, whether ‘normal’ or otherwise. He is working on the problem of symptom choice.

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