Drugs, Alcohol & Marijuana

**#1**

**Torah Bereishis 9:18-21**

*And the sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth; and Ham he was the father of Canaan.*

*These three were the sons of Noah, and from these, the entire earth spread out.*

*And Noah began to be a master of the soil, and he planted a vineyard.*

*And he drank of the wine and became drunk, and he uncovered himself within his tent.*

**Rambam, Laws of Personal Development 1:3**

*Whoever becomes drunk is a sinner, is shameful, and will lose his wisdom.*

**Question: What could be the reason for Noah, whom the Torah describes as "a righteous man" in the beginning of the story, to get drunk and debase himself?**

**#2**

**Questions:**

* **Why do people take drugs?**
* **Why do people consume alcohol?**
* **Should we differentiate between different types of drugs? For example, tobacco and alcohol are legal drugs in most countries. Some countries (and some states in the USA) have legalized marijuana for recreational use and many or most countries have legalized marijuana for medical use. Does that make a difference?**
* **Is there a moral equivalency between all drugs, or should “hard” drugs such as heroin, cocaine, and methamphetamine be treated differently? Where do you draw the line?**

**#3**

**Talmud Pesachim 113a**

*Rabbi Chiya advises his son (amongst other things): "Do not to take drugs …"*

**Rashbam (Medieval Commentator explains this statement)**

*If you take drugs, you will become addicted and you will squander away your money.*

**Questions:**

* **Are there other dangers to taking drugs?**
* **Are all drugs dangerous?**
* **Are there times when it is okay to take drugs?**
* **Should drugs be illegal by law?**
* **Should drugs and alcohol be easily available?**

**#4**

**Midrash Tanchuma, Noah**

*When Noah took to planting, Satan came and stood before him and said to him: "What are you planting?" Said he: "A vineyard." Said Satan to him: "What is its nature?" Said he: "Its fruits are sweet, whether moist or dry, and one makes from them wine which brings joy to the heart." Said Satan to Noah: "Do you desire that we should plant it together, you and I?" Said Noah: "Yes."*

*What did Satan do? He brought a lamb and slaughtered it over the vine; then he brought a lion, and slaughtered it over it; then he brought a monkey, and slaughtered it over it; then he brought a swine, and slaughtered it over it; and he watered the vine with their blood. Thus he alluded to Noah: When a person drinks one cup, he is like a lamb, modest and meek. When he drinks two cups, he becomes mighty as a lion and begins to speak with pride, saying, "Who compares with me!" As soon as he drinks three or four cups, he becomes a monkey, dancing and frolicking and profaning his mouth, and knowing not what he does. When he becomes drunk, he becomes a pig, dirtied by mud and wallowing in filth.*

**Psalms 104:15**

*Wine gladdens the heart of man.*

According to Jewish law, wine is used for many holy occasions, like Shabbos, holidays, and mitzvah celebrations.

**Question: In Judaism, on the one hand wine is frowned upon, on the other hand it is praised. How do you resolve this contradiction?**

**#5**

**Question: Is there a permissible equivalent to drugs, where a person gets "high" in a healthy way without the use of any substance, and without a feeling of emptiness afterwards?**

**Talmud Taanis 7b**

*Torah, when it is learned for its own sake, is a “life drug."*

**Question: What is the concept behind this statement?**

**#6**

**Question: What's your takeaway from today's discussion?**