

Rav Kook on the Stirrings of Alcoholism

It is axiomatic that any-thing good, respectable and worthy, when in it's correct space and grasped in isolation, is perceived in a fully tranquil position. Serenity, quiet and the spirit pleasing sweetness pass over, hover and fill the living void of those who grasp it. Those who gaze from afar, however, towards the garment of this honor and its manifestations, grasp the noise and lack of peace and quiet as the sweet and elevated quality. The heartfelt, when they discern that there is no absolute good apart from the serenity, quiet and the expansive expression of restful fullness, seek out a life of this quality, unable to find it without true recognition, worship and the full rectification of traits in goodness and holiness. The foolish, however, accepts the image of the elevated quality and yearns towards it as it was imagined in their hearts, in the image of noise and chaotic emotion, in the manifold protrusions of sensual exaggeration,, which can only be found in the revelation of self-interest, in the satisfaction of the imaginative faculty and the perversions of the heart that yearn towards palatial expansion and control of the other. However, the pleasures of eating, drinking, and further sensual gratification are transient in their noisiness and exaggerated feeling, towards which the lowly soul yearns. However, "The stomachs of the wicked will lack", as it is impossible to consistently fill the void with them, and consequently the desire for more will reappear, and the yearning will be for more lasting pleasures. Among these, the phenomenon of drunkenness, in which the lack of serenity is more acute, and the confusion of thought is deeply felt, appears to the lowly soul as the reification of strong living...

Mussar Avicha, 41 (Translation is my own).