Khamr

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(a.), wine. The word, although very common in early Arabic poetry, is probably a loanword from Aramaic. The Hebrew yayn has in Arabic (wayn) the meaning of black grapes. The question has been fully treated by I. Guidi in his Della sede primitiva dei popoli semitici, in Memorie della R. Acad. dei Lincei, series iii, vol. iii, 603 ff.

1. Juridical aspects

Arabia and the Syriac desert are, in contradistinction to Palestine and Mesopotamia, not a soil fit for the vine; there are, however, exceptions, among which may be mentioned al-Ṭāʾif (see H. Lammens, Ṭāʾif, 35 ff. = MFOB, viii, 146 ff.), Shibām and other parts of Yaman. Wine, probably of an inferior quality, is also mentioned in Medina (see below). Usually, however, it seems to have been imported from Syria and ʿIrāq; in early Arabic poetry the wine-trade is chiefly connected with Jews and Christians, who pitched their tent ḥānūt, also a loanword from Aramaic) among the Bedouins and provided it with a sign denoting its character. In it entertainment sessions were held, in the company of female singers who often also belonged to the establishment. The wine was kept in jars or skins, provided with a mouth-piece which was closed by means of a string.

In the days of Muḥammad the people of Mecca and Medina used to indulge in drinking wine as often as an occasion offered itself, so that drunkenness often became a cause of scandal and of indulgence in a second vice, gambling, which together with wine, incurred Muḥammad’s condemnation. Tradition has not refrained from describing how Ḥamza b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, Muḥammad’s uncle, in a fit of drunkenness mutilated ʿAlī’s camels (Bukhārī, Sharb, bāb 13; Khums, bāb 1; Muslim, Ashriba, trads. 1, 2; Maghāzī, bāb 12; Abū Dāwūd, Kharādī, bāb 19). The commentaries on the Kurʾān also relate how Muḥammad’s companions held drinking-parties which caused them to commit faults in
ritual prayer (see al-Ṭabarī, Tafsīr, ad sūra XIV, 44; Muslim, Faḍāʾil al-Ṣahāba, trad. 44, cf. 45; Ahmad b. Ḥanbal, i, 185-6).

The prohibition of wine was not in Muḥammad’s programme at the beginning. In Sūra XVI, 69 we even find it praised as one of the signs of Allāh’s grace to mankind: “And of the fruit of palmtrees, and of grapes, ye obtain an inebriating liquor, and also good nourishment”. But the consequences of drunkenness manifesting themselves in the way just mentioned are said to have led Muḥammad to change his attitude. The first revelation giving vent to these feelings was Sūra II, 216: “They will ask thee concerning wine and gambling ( maysir ). Answer, in both there is great sin and also some things of use unto men: but their sinfulness is greater than their use”. This revelation, however, was not considered as a prohibition. As people did not change their customs and the order of prayer happened to be disturbed in consequence thereof, a new revelation was issued, viz. Sūra IV, 46: “O true believers! come not to prayers when ye are drunk, until ye understand what ye say” etc. But neither was this revelation considered as a general prohibition of wine, until Sūra V, 92 made an end to drinking: “O true believers! Surely wine and maysir, and stone pillars and divining arrows, are an abomination of the work of Satan; therefore avoid them, that ye may prosper”.

This sequence of revelations regarding wine is the accepted one among the traditionists and commentators of the Kurʾān (see Ahmad b. Ḥanbal, Musnad, ii, 351-2; Ṭabarī, Tafsīr, v, 58 ad sūra IV, 46).

The prohibition of wine may, however, also be looked upon from a wider aspect, as Islam is not the only monotheistic religion which has taken a negative attitude towards wine. It is well known that, according to the Old Testament (Numbers vi, 3-4) the Nazarite who had wholly devoted himself to Yahweh had to abstain from wine and spirits, just as the priests before administering the sacred rites (Lev. x, 9). The Nabataeans, according to Diodorus Siculus (xix, 94, 3), likewise abstained from wine and one of their gods is called in their inscriptions “the good god who drinks no wine”. Likewise, abstention from wine belonged to the rule of many Christian monks. All this has its roots in remote Semitic antiquity which ascribed a demoniac character to wine and spirits. The same is true for music, especially singing, which is also prohibited by Islam. It is not improbable that negative feelings of this kind may have worked, together with the motives mentioned above, to induce Muḥammad to prohibit wine.

The prohibition of the Kurʾān has been taken over by the jurists; all madḥhab s, and also the Shīʿa, call wine harām and the wine-trade is forbidden. For an exposition of the Shāfiʿī view, see al-Nawawī, Minhādj, ed. van den Berg, iii, 241; for that of the Ḥanafīs,
The prohibition of wine, although unanimously accepted, gave rise to dissensions between the juridical schools, dissensions which are reflected in *ḥadīth* in a historical disguise. The discussions start from the question: what is wine? It is said that, when the use of wine was peremptorily prohibited, the people of Medina poured out in the streets all that they possessed of the appreciated liquor (Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, ii, 132-3; iii, 26, 189-90, 217, 260 bis; iv, 355-6). Ibn ʿUmar declares, on the contrary, that at the time of the prohibition, there was no wine in Medina at all (Bukhārī, *Ashriba*, bāb 1). Anas b. Mālik (ibid.) says that there was scarcely any wine from grapes in Medina, when the prohibition was revealed; people used wine from *busr* and *tamr* (two kinds of dates). In another tradition (ibid., bāb 3) wine from *fadīk* and *zahw* (two other kinds of dates) is mentioned. ʿUmar is represented as delivering a *khutba* which was meant to settle the question; according to his son ʿAbd Allāh, he said: Wine has been prohibited by the Qurʾān; it comes from five kinds of fruits, from grapes, from dates, from honey, from wheat and from barley; wine is what obscures the intellect (wa *l-khamr mā khāmara al-ʿakl*; Bukhārī, *Ashriba*, bāb 2). The question remained, whether beverages prepared from grapes in a different way were prohibited. There was e.g. a kind of syrup. “When ʿUmar visited Syria, the population complained of its unhealthy and heavy climate and they added: This drink alone will heal us. Then ʿUmar allowed them to drink honey. Then they
said: Honey cannot heal us. Thereupon one of the natives of Syria said to him: May we not prepare something of this drink for you? It has no inebriating power. He said: All right. Then they cooked it till two-thirds were evaporated and one-third of it remained. They brought it to ʿUmar, who put his finger into it and licked it. Then he said: This is ẓiḥāʾ like camels’ ẓiḥāʾ (viz. the pitch with which they smeared their skins). Then he allowed them to drink it” (Mālik, As̲h̲ribã, bāb 14). According to the first chapter of the same kitāb, however, ‘Umar punishes a man who had become drunk on ẓiḥāʾ. Juice from grapes, prepared by pressing them only, is considered as wine. Ṭāriḳ b. Suwayd al-Ḥaḍrami said to the Prophet, We have in our country grapes which we press. May we drink the juice? He said: No. This negative answer is given three times and when Ṭāriḳ asks whether the juice may be given the sick to drink, Muḥammad answers: It is no medicine, it is sickness (Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, v, 292 f.). And not only those who drink and sell wine are cursed by Muḥammad, but also those who press grapes and have them pressed in order to drink the juice (Ibn Mād̲j̲a, Aṣ̲h̲ri̲bã, bāb 6).

Another question of importance arose, in connection with spirits: Had they to be considered as wine or not? All the mad̲h̲hab̲s, except the Ḥanafis, have answered the question in the affirmative sense. They have consequently extended the prohibition of wine, in accordance with the intention underlying it. Tradition, which is the best source for the history of the origin of several institutions, shows that the question belongs to the much-debated ones. The standard ḥadīt̲h̲, which is found very frequently in the classical collections, runs as follows (Muslim’s version Imām, trad. 26 is cited, because it contains important details): “Some men of ʿAbd al-Ḳays went to the Apostle of God and said to him: O Prophet of God, we are a tribe belonging to Rabīʾa; between us and yourself dwell the infidels of Muḍar, so that we can only reach you in the sacred month. Tell us therefore what we have to tell our tribespeople which will open Paradise for us if we to cling to it. The Apostle of God answered: I order four things and I forbid four things. Serve God without associating anything with him. Perform the ṣalāt, pay the zakāt, fast the month of Ramaḍān and deliver the fifth part of booty. And I forbid four things: dubbāʾ, ḥantam, muzaffat and nakīr. They asked: O Apostle of God, how do you know what the nakīr is? He said: Well, it is a palmtrunk which you hollow out; then you pour small dates into it and upon them water. When the process of fermentation has finished, you drink it with the effect that a man hits his cousin with the sword.—Now among these men there was someone who had received a blow of the sword in this way, ¶ but he had concealed it out of shame before the Apostle of God. So he said: But from what vessels should we drink then, O Apostle of God? He answered: From leather skins, the mouthpieces of which are smeared with pitch. They answered: O Prophet of God, our country teems with mice so that no single skin can be kept whole. Then the Prophet of
God answered: Even though the mice should eat them, even though the mice should eat them, even though the mice should eat them.

This tradition did not meet with general approval. It is said that the Anṣār or other people complained of their difficulty in finding the skins necessary for preserving drinks without their becoming fermented. Thereupon the Prophet is said to have withdrawn his prohibition, wholly or partly (Bukhārī, Ashriba, bāb 8; Muslim, Ashriba, trads. 63-6, etc.). In some versions of this tradition there occurs the restriction that all the fermented inebriating drinks remain prohibited. Innumerable are the traditions which only contain the rule that all drinks which may cause drunkenness are prohibited in any quantity (kull muskir ḥarām kathīruhu wa kalīluhu) and this rule has passed into many books of fīkh (Bukhārī, Maghāzī, bāb 60; Muslim, Ashriba, trads. 67-75; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, i, 145; ii, 16 bis; iii, 38; iv, 87; v, 25-6; vi, 36, etc.). Of special traditions prohibiting fermented drinks, there may be mentioned the following. It is forbidden or disapproved of to sell raisins if they are to be used for preparing nabīdūh (Nasāʾī Ashriba, bāb 51, 51). It is prohibited to mix together different kinds of fruits so that the mixture should become intoxicating. This tradition occurs frequently; see e.g. Bukhārī, Ashriba, bāb 11; Muslim, Ashriba, trads. 16-29; Nasāʾī Ashriba, bābs 4-17; Ibn Saʿd, viii, 360; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, i, 276; ii, 46; vi, 242, 292. But each of these kinds may be used separately for preparing a non-fermented drink (Muslim, Ashriba, trads. 81-3; Nasāʾī, Ashriba, bābs 14-18, etc.).

It can easily be seen that the difficulty in this matter was caused by two circumstances. People were accustomed to prepare from all kinds of dates, from raisins and other fruits, drinks which only became inebriating if they were preserved a long time, and probably also if they were prepared after special methods. Where was the line of demarcation between the allowed and the prohibited kind to be placed? Several collections of traditions went so far as to mention nabīdūh among the drinks prepared by Muḥammad’s wives and drunk by him (Muslim, Ashriba, trads. 79-89; Aḥmad, i, 232-3, 240, 287, 320-1, 336, 355, 369, 372; ii, 35; iii, 304, 307, 313-14, 326, 379, 384, etc.). Abū Dāwūd (Ashriba, bāb 10) and Ibn Mādja (Ashriba, bāb 12) have preserved a tradition on this subject which is instructive. Ibn Mādja’s version is given here: ‘Āʾisha said “We used to prepare nabīdūh for the Apostle of God in a skin; we took a handful of dates or a handful of raisins, cast it into the skin and poured water upon it. The nabīdūh we prepared in this way in the morning was drunk by him in the evening; and when we prepared it in the evening he drank it the next morning”. In another tradition of the same bāb, Ibn ʿAbbās says that the Prophet used to drink this nabīdūh even on the third day; but what was left then was poured out.
All this could, however, not persuade the majority of the faḳīh s to declare nabīḏh allowed; three of the madḥhab s as well as the Shīʿa prohibit the use of nabīḏh. The Ḥanafī school, on the other hand, allows it, when used with moderation, for medicinal purposes, etc.

It would take us too far to give here a detailed survey of the opinions of the faḳīḥs of all madḥhabs; it would be superfluous, to some extent at least, because the more important differences regard chiefly nabīḏh only. The following rapid survey is based on the Fatāwā ʿĀlamgīrī, vi, 604 ff. (cf. Shaʿrānī’s Mīzān, Cairo 1279, 192-3).

Allowed according to the idjmāʿ is non-fermented, very sweet drink.

Prohibited (harām), according to the idjmāʿ, are wine and sakar of every kind. As to wine, there are six cases: to drink it in any quantity or to make use of it is harām; to deny this is kufr; to buy, sell, present it, etc. is harām; no responsibility (dimān) rests on him who spoils or destroys wine (mutlīfḥā); whether wine is a possession (māl) is an unsettled point; it is nadjīs just as blood and urine; he who drinks any quantity of it is liable to punishment.

Several kinds of products prepared by means of grapes (bādhik, munaṣṣaf, etc.) are prohibited according to the majority (ʿāmma) of the faḳīḥs.

Allowed, according to the majority of the faḳīḥs are ṭilāʿ (see above) or muthallath and nabīḏh from dates with the restrictions mentioned above. So is juice from grapes when the process of cooking has made to evaporate two-thirds. Muḥammad (al-Shaybānī [q.v.]) has a deviating opinion on this point.

As to the punishment of him who drinks wine, hadīṯ tells us that Muḥammad and Abū Bakr were wont to inflict forty blows by means of palm branches or sandals (Bukhari, Hudūd, bāb 2-4; Hudūd, trads. 35-7). Under ʿUmar’s caliphate, however, Khālid b. al-Walīd reported to him that people were indulging in prohibited drinks. Thereupon ʿUmar consulted the Companions, who advised him to fix the number of blows at eighty, a number suggested by the Kurʾān which prescribes that those who accuse muḥsanāt of zināʾ, without being able to prove their accusations by the aid of four witnesses, shall be punished with eighty blows (Sūra XXIV, 4).

Repeated drinking of wine, according to some traditions, was punished by death at Muḥammad’s order (Abū Dāwūd, Hudūd, bāb 36; Ibn Mādīq, Hudūd, bāb 17; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, ii, 136, 166, 191; iv, 93, etc.). It is, however, added in some traditions that capital
punishment in such cases is not according to the sunna of the Prophet (Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, i, 125, 130; cf. Ṭayālisī, no. 183).

The different madhhab{s} have adopted ʿUmar’s view; drinking wine is punished with eighty blows; if the transgressor is a slave this number is however reduced to forty, because in the Қurʾān the punishment of the handmaid’s zināʾ is fixed at half the amount of blows with which the free woman is punished (Sūra IV, 30). The Shāfiʿī is, however, cling to the practice ascribed to Muḥammad and Abū Bakr; with them the number of blows is consequently forty or twenty (see Zurḳāni, iv, 42; Nawawī, in Muslim, iv, 156).

The prohibition of wine and spirits (according to three of the four madhhab{s}) is one of the distinctive marks of the Muslim world; its consequences can hardly be overrated. This is not seriously affected by the fact that transgressors have been numerous, according to literary evidence. The praise of wine, not uncommon in pre-Islamic poetry, remained one of the favourite topics also of Muslim poets (cf. the wine-songs by Ibn al-Muʿtazz, Abū Nuwās, etc., and see khamriyya), and at the court of the Caliphs wine was drunk at revelling parties as if no prohibition existed at all (see e.g. The 1001 Nights, passim).

Even the common people could not always and everywhere refrain from their national drink, date wine of several kinds; the caliph ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz deemed it necessary to promulgate a special edict in order to abolish this custom (see von Kremer, Culturgeschichtliche Streifzüge, Leipzig 1873, 68-9).

Wine has a special place in the literary works of the mystics, where it is one of the symbols of ecstasy. In this point they only took over the language of their Christian and non-Christian predecessors. As early as Philo of Alexandria ecstasy is compared with intoxication (see especially his De Vita Contemplativa). Among the Ibāḥiyya, language may have been a reflex of practice; but this cannot be said of Şūfīs in general, who on the contrary, clung to the ascetic methods of the via purgativa. As to Ḥāfiẓ’s wine-and love songs, it is an unsettled point whether they are merely metaphorical or not.

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2. As a product.
Wine has been known in the Orient since the earliest times, and Arabic literature preserves vague memories of its legendary origin, not omitting to recall the demonic aspect, in accordance with Qur’an V, 90-2. It takes account, on the one hand, of Babylonian traditions linked to Biblical characters such as Adam and Noah (cf. the Midrash based on Babylonian elements; Tanḥūmā , Lublin 1879, 28-9) and, on the other hand, of the Aramaic-Syriac extra-Biblical tradition, thus symbolising that ancient culture of the Fertile Crescent inherited by the mediaeval Muslim world. Certain versions link the origin of wine to the two great civilisations which were neighbours to Islam, that of Rūm and that of India (cf. al-Masʿūdī, Murūdī , ii, 88-92, §§ 518-9; al-Raḳīḳ al-Ḳayrawānī, Kuṭb al-sūrūr , B.N. Paris, ar. 3302, f. 42; al-Nawādījī, Halbat al-kumayt , Cairo 1938, 11-12; al-Badrī al-Dimasḥqī, Rāḥat al-arwāḥ , B.N. Paris, ar. 3544, ff. 58a-59a; Bahr al-ḥikāyāt , B.N. Paris, ar. 3588, ff. 107b-108b; the literature of the awāʾil [q.v.], notably Istanbul, Reisulkuttab, 899, f. 98b; Topkapi, E.H. 1329, f. 69; B.N. Paris, ar. 2079, ff. 96a-97a, 5931, f. 252a).

The Book of Agriculture attributed to Ibn Waḥshiyya [q.v.] points out the importance of the vine in the Fertile Crescent, and alludes to wines in speaking of the various types of grape which are suitable for their manufacture (Leiden ms. or. 303, ii, 87-291).

The Arabs who settled in agricultural regions had no real tradition of viticulture; in fact, in pre-Islamic Arabia vineyards were rare and wine-vaults even more so (however, there were some in al-Ṭāʾif). The quality of the wine was mediocre, and a certain amount must even then have been imported, mainly by Jewish and Christian merchants (after the birth of Islam, this commerce was practised exclusively by these two communities, as a result of the Qur’ānic prohibition). One should not suppose that the Bedouin knew nothing of wine (as is claimed by the Shuʿūbīs [Basḥār, Dīwān , Cairo 1950-6, i, 378, 1. 2, and especially Abū Nuwās, Dīwān , Cairo 1898, 244-5; cf. Ibn Ḳutayba, ʿUyūn , iii, 237; Ibn Ḥamdūn, Tadhkira , Istanbul Ragib, 1083, iii, f. 287a; Ibn Gharṣiya, in Nawādir al-makhtūtāt , Cairo 1951, 250]), nor that they drank it to excess (Ibn Ḥāwi, Fann al-shīr al-khamrī , Beirut n.d., 11). The truth is that the ancient Arabs were acquainted with wine, though tasting it only on rare occasions such as inter-tribal fairs (cf. G. Jacob, Studien in ar. Dichtung , Berlin 1895, 95-109; H. Lammens, Le berceau de l’Islam, Paris 1914, 84-5; H. F. Lutz, Viticulture and brewing in the Ancient Orient , Leipzig 1922, 33-7, 143-51; Ḏ j̱ awād ʿAlī, Taʾrīk̲ h̲  al-ʿArab ḳabl al-Islām , Baghdād 1951-9, viii, 162-5).

The expansion of Islam enabled the Muslims to familiarise themselves with new regional types of wine, and the taste of the consumers gained in refinement to the extent that connoisseurs were able to appreciate and distinguish between wines of diverse origin; al-Ḏ j̱ āḥiẓ ( Shārib ) speaks even of various “wine-producing regions” ( buldān ). The poets
of the Islamic era speak of countries renowned before the advent of Islam for the quality of their wines (for Beirut, see F. Gabrieli, in *RSO*, xv (1935), 39; for ʿĀna, in Upper-Mesopotamia, see al-Akhtal, *Dīwān*, Beirut 1891, 117; F. Gabrieli, *art. cit.*, 51; J. Bencheikh, in *BEO*, xviii (1963-4), 18-20; cf. Ibn Ḥawkal, tr. Kramers-Wiet, 223; for Iran see F. Gabrieli, *art. cit.*, 62; for the viticultural tradition, very often of Sāsānid origin, cf. the wine-producing regions mentioned by al-Thāʿālibī, in J. M. Unvala, *King Husrav and his boy*, Paris 1926, 45, and J. Bencheikh, *op. cit.* There were also renowned wine-producing districts in Egypt and in other parts of the Muslim world.

As regards the wine-making process, the information that we have is not very extensive. The grapes were trodden, with a light jumping movement, in a *maʿṣara* (shallow vat), according to an ancient procedure. Wine-presses of circular motion were not introduced in the Orient until very late (some ancient specimens still exist in certain monasteries in the Lebanon). A poet of the 4th/10th century (*apud* al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, iv, 144), describes the *maʿṣara* as a sea of red flames in which the labourer stands, the lower half of his body soaked with the grape-juice. From the 7th/13th century onwards, miniatures provide the best illustrations of the process (see D. S. Rice, *Deacon or drink*, in *Arabica*, v (1958), to which may be added Leningrad ms. S. 23, p. 76); here labourers are seen carrying the grapes, others press them by treading them in a vat, hanging on straps in order to jump more easily; in the vat there is an aperture, allowing the juice to flow out into a receptacle; against a wall stand the amphorae (*dann*, pl. *dinān*) with tapered bases, in which the fermentation takes place (in vaults, seldom in the open), and the maturation (on the storing in amphorae, cf. Leningrad S 23, pp. 44, 103; yet what are involved are perhaps not wine amphorae, but large water containers, see G. Le-Bon, *La Civilisation*, Paris 1884, 397, and cf. the *khazzān* described by Kushājīm, *Dīwān*, 1313, 83, and al-Suyūṭī, *al-Hayʾa al-saniyya*, Univ. of Istanbul, Arap 1476, f. 50). These various stages are described in works of literature, while religious treatises aimed at prohibiting the consumption of certain drinks, concern themselves at some length with the various types of vessel used for fermentation.

The mediaeval anthologies and the treatises of *fiqh* list various ingredients for the manufacture of alcoholic beverages; fruits: dates (see *tamr*), figs, apricots, cherries, mulberries, and various berries; cereals: wheat, barley, maize, millet; honey (*hydromel* is called *bitʿ*); sugar cane; milk (Ibn Ḳutayba, *Ashriba*, speaks of the making of alcoholic drinks from different kinds of milk), especially mares’ milk (for making *kūmis*, introduced at an early stage by the Turks, and attested from the 5th/11th century onwards, which was to become the favourite drink of the Mamlūks [see *kumīs*]). On all these beverages, see *šarāb*. 
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