

## High Holidays & Wine

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As the holiday season draws to a close with Shemini Atzeret this week, **a reflection from Benjamin Cantz** in **Sh'ma** (Sept 1988), connecting the wine-making process to the High Holidays:

The eight days of Succos are completed with the holidays of Shemini Atzeret and Simchas Torah. On Shemini Atzeret the prayer for rain is said for the first time since spring. This special prayer is the occasion of reintroducing the words "He causes the wind to blow and the rain to fall" into the daily prayers for the coming half-year. One growing cycle has ended and a new one begins.

The natural world depends on water. Nothing can live and grow without it. Without water the vine cannot draw up out of the ground the goodness therein, or produce the leaves that gather in the sun's rays, or fill the grapes with juice. Without water there is no life.

In the Talmud, Torah is compared to water. It comes from above and goes down to the lowest spot. Without the water of Torah a Jew cannot draw up out of the ground of the world the elements of his spiritual life that lie within all of creation. All creation longs to grow toward its Creator in love and humility. Torah makes this possible for the Jew.

**[Read the entire piece here.](#)**