

Dirty martini on the rocks and a Gemara shiur, please...

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Are you paralyzed with indecision when trying to choose between an evening of boozy revelry with your friends or a scholarly night of learning Talmud with your chevruta? Me too!

That's why I was thrilled to read about the first **Chabar, a Chabad bar**. One part old Hasidic shtiebel, one part modern party scene, this hybrid venue hosts both local musicians and Torah classes, and features both a plasma screen TV and traditional sefarim (religious books).

I write in a jestful tone, but I actually think this is fantastic. In fact, my first thought upon reading about the Chabar was to wonder what synagogue-transform-champion **Rabbi Hayim Herring** would think about it (see **this article**, and **this one**, for a sample of Rabbi Herring's ideas and projects). It seems to me that, for certain communities, the addition of a really nice bar might be a great tool for revitalization, and for figuring more prominently, and in new ways, in congregants' lives. Maybe if more synagogues had full bars, they would attract more young adults. Perhaps shuls could also find success integrating coffee shops too, following the Starbucks "third place" model.

What do you think? What kind of atmospheres do you want your synagogue to include? Is the Chabar brilliant or tacky? Wave of the future or doomed to failure?

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