



Haifa Center for Mediterranean History
מרכז חיפה לחקר ההיסטוריה של הים התיכון
مركز حيفا لدراسات تاريخ البحر الأبيض المتوسط



אוניברסיטת חיפה
University of Haifa
جامعة حيفا



Survey Introduction to Jewish Esotericism

Department of
Jewish History

Wednesday,
May 11, 2022, 14:00

Room #146,
New Library Wing,
University of Haifa

Ask us for the
Zoom link

נכנס יין יצא סוד Wine in Safedian Kabbalah

Prof. Vadim Putzu

Missouri State University



Wine's ubiquitous presence and important role in many different realms of Jewish life, combined with certain general features of the beverage per se, have made it a product of unique cultural and symbolic significance in premodern Judaism. As a result, attitudes towards wine provide a smaller-scale reflection of ideological and existential postures maintained by a Jewish individual or social group, and thus investigating said attitudes may contribute to elucidating more fundamental elements in the mentalities of the authors under scrutiny.

Analyzing how four kabbalists active in 16th-century Safed—Joseph Karo, Solomon Alqabetz, Moses Cordovero and Hayyim Vital—discussed the symbolic and practical uses of wine in their works sheds light on their respective views on the material world and how to conduct oneself in it, their understanding of evil and its origin, and their perception of the “other.” Consequently, this exercise in “kabbalistic enology” contributes to redress certain sweeping generalizations about Safedian Kabbalah in favor of a more nuanced and multifarious picture.