Perhaps it would be better to use *less* energy to protect the brain from oxidative byproducts of too much thinking? There's an old joke about the futuristic person who goes to the brain store to buy a new brain. He finds Mozart's brain available for a huge amount of money, and Einstein's for even more, so he asks the manager if there aren't even more expensive brains to consider buying. He's taken to the locked vault where he's shown a brain that costs 10 times as much as Einstein's. He's told that this brain belonged to (pick your own name to put here). It costs more than Einstein's because it's never been used.

Perhaps there are differences in types of thinking. Perhaps problem solving is a different type of thinking than trying to guess how the ballgame will end. Perhaps daydreaming is good and physics is bad, or vice versa. And is abstract thinking (algebraic geometry) better or worse than non-abstract thinking (differential equations)?

Does anyone believe that because higher levels of education are associated with a lower risk of developing AD that everyone should go to college and that the cost will be offset by the reduced rate of AD 60 years later?

The closer we look at diseases, the more complex and challenging they become. Epidemiological studies to determine true risk factors, provide questions, not answers.

– Joseph H. Friedman, MD

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Where Are the Spirits of Yesteryear?

What is the dynamic force behind civilization? Patrick McGovern, a contemporary archeologist, declares that it is the quest for intoxication. Certainly a spirited response; and while it may sound hyperbolic in the eyes of the temperance movement, it is nonetheless a sadly accurate presumption.

The first mention of intoxicating fluids in the Bible occurs when post-diluvian Noah plants a vineyard at the base of Mount Ararat, consumes the wine and becomes drunken (Genesis 9:20-21.) And thus, according to Scripture, a man who had found singular grace in the eyes of the Lord is quickly besotted by a wine derived from the berries of his own vineyard. G. K. Chesterton (1874 – 1936), reflecting upon the abating floods, has then elaborated on the biblical tale:

> And Noah he often said to his wife
> when he sat down to dine,
> I don't care where the water goes
> if it doesn't get into the wine.

The origins of wine and other fermented intoxicants are lost in a swirl of legends, heroic myths and apocryphal fairy tales. One of the most vivid of these tales speaks of the mythical king of Persia, Jamshid, the fourth ruler of the great Pishdadian dynasty of greater Iran. The legend declares that Jamshid banished one of his harem wives who, in despondency, then sought a poison for suicide. In her search for a lethal substance she came upon an abandoned vat of old, fermented fruit juice; and thinking it a poison, she drank of it, thus discovering, instead, that the drink provided a form of unanticipated exultation. In haste she returned to King Jamshid, shared her inebriant discovery with him and was promptly returned to her harem status. And thus, one legend tells us, the discoverer of a principal form of addictive slavery was rewarded by hastening her return to another form of slavery.

Unromantic chemists, however, have provided science with a means of determining the age of recovered artifacts by a radioactive measuring process called carbon-dating; and secondly by infrared spectrophotometry they possess a procedure that can analyze small amounts of dried residue clinging to the interior of ancient pottery and thereby identify some substances found in wines and thus may infer that the vessel had once stored wine in the past; and further, they are then able to identify the regions from whence wine-making had originated.

And so, scientists tell us that the first evidence of wine consumption is found in the Neolithic settlements in the Caucasus foothills, some 9,000 years ago. It is likely that the berries were foraged from wild grape vine or other fruits. The development of terracotta pottery, during the late Neolithic age, allowed for the storage of excess wines and hence provided modern-day chemists with ancient specimens in the form of wine-stained shards which were amenable to modern analysis.

Gene-mapping of the numerous grape cultivars, currently employed in the extensive wineries of the Mediterranean and Asia Minor has verified that they are traceable to the wild grape species of that southern Caucasus area situated between the wine-dark waters of the Black and Caspian Seas.

Domestication of the grape vine was the next step in the evolution of viticulture; and there is evidence that this agricultural advancement simultaneously evolved in many Mediterranean and Middle East sites including Macedonia in northern Greece and in Mesopotamia. Physical evidence of viticultural specialization, a necessary phase in the evolution of the industry (with wine presses and facilities for the storage and shipment of the ultimate fermented product), is found throughout the southern Balkans, Mediterranean and many regions in the Middle East.

With the notable exception of Islam (the Prophet had declared that there is the devil in every grape), the many religions that took origin within this nursery of civilization readily incor-

porated wine as a ceremonial component of their rituals; and inevitably gods – such as Dionysus, god of revelry – were honored as progenitors of the wines used in their altar celebrations. And thus, mass intoxication is now defined as a bacchanalia, a dubious tribute to Bacchus, the Latin variant of Dionysus. Many orders of monks, such as the Carmelites and Benedictines, also labored to produce distinctive varietals. Indeed, Dom Perignon, a name identified closely with champagne, was a Benedictine monk.

Where ever vineyards can be planted – from the valleys of Tuscany, the foothills of California to the plains of Shiraz - man has discovered and savored the questionable gift of wine. Isak Dinesen (1885 – 1962) reflected upon this: "What is man, when you come to think upon him, but a minutely set, ingenious machine for turning, with infinite artfulness, the red wine of Shiraz into urine ?"

– Stanley M. Aronson, MD

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Foreword: An Update in Advances for Stroke

Brian Silver, MD

Much has occurred in the last decade with respect to stroke in the areas of public education, prehospital care, acute treatment, rehabilitation, and secondary prevention. In the series of reviews that follow, individuals involved in the care of stroke patients from across the state cover the spectrum of care for stroke. The first article describes primary prevention strategies and public education resources; the second surveys the current state of emergency medical services in Rhode Island; the third emphasizes the importance of early treatment with thrombolytic therapy and efforts to improve time to treatment; the fourth reviews the science behind stroke units; the fifth examines the broad range of opportunities for stroke rehabilitation; and the sixth discusses the latest in secondary stroke prevention from hypertension treatment to new options in anticoagulation. We hope these reviews serve to stimulate discussion and continue to improve care for patients across Rhode Island.

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