



B'NAI DAVID-JUDEA

Shabbat Shorts

Last time on Shabbat Shorts we explored when Kiddush should be said at our tables.

Now, let's look closely at the halacha of *when we drink the Kiddush wine* (or grape juice), and in doing so, more fully understand the purpose of Kiddush.

The Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 271:16-17) explains that no one should drink from his or her cup until the person making Kiddush has done so. However, this is the case only if those listening to Kiddush are "dependent" on the Kiddush-reciter's cup. What does this mean?

- If your practice is to pour from the Kiddush cup into empty glasses (or shot glasses, as is often the LA custom) after Kiddush has been said, then everyone assembled must wait to drink until after the person who said Kiddush has done so. This is because all are "dependent" on the Kiddush-reciter's cup.
- But, if your practice is to pre-pour a revi'it (3+ oz.) into each individual cup before Kiddush is recited, then all the assembled may drink from their cups even before the person reciting Kiddush drinks.
- It is important to note that as a matter of Halachic principle one does not actually need to drink wine **at all** in order to fulfill Kiddush. Only the Kiddush reciter needs to drink a revi'it-- everyone else just needs to listen. And so, to clarify a question that I get often: If you pre-pour your cups, there is no need to pour additional wine from the Kiddush reciter's cup into those cups.

The fascinating and important practical implications that this halacha has for us get at the core of what Kiddush is all about. Kiddush alerts us to sanctity, and in Judaism, sanctity comes from separation and distinction. We see this in

many places in our tradition: a bride and groom becoming separate and distinct from the general population through Kiddushin, the designation as "holy" of the food that only kohanim were allowed to eat, Shabbat being called "Kadosh" as a result of its being separated from the rest of the week. Sanctity marks something as special-- separate and elevated in the best possible way.

Even down to the details of when we drink from our cups, Kiddush makes us aware of the need for separation in order to experience sanctity. It reminds us that on Shabbat, we stop and recognize that even God made this time separate and unique, and our actions should reflect that. We use a cup that is designated for Kiddush. And-- unlike the rest of the week when we eat and drink whenever we want-- we need to either pay attention to when the Kiddush-reciter drinks, or think ahead and pre-pour our cups. This focusing on distinction, detail, and our surroundings brings us fully into the sacred time of Shabbat. These small gestures make the day feel special and elevated.

This Shabbat, I encourage you to start noticing these details in Kiddush. Do you prefer to pre-pour, so everyone has his or her own cup to drink out of independently and immediately, or do you like when everyone's wine is poured from the Kiddush cup and distributed, and then all assembled wait to drink until after the Kiddush-reciter does?

Our halacha is filled with nuances, and how we decide to practice them around our tables can be meaningful and beautiful, as well as an opportunity to personally enhance the sanctity of Shabbat!

I love feedback!
rabbanitalissa@bnaidavid.com

B'nai David-Judea 8906 West Pico Blvd. Los Angeles, CA 90035
director@bnaidavid.com

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B'nai David-Judea, 8906 W. Pico Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90035

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