



B'NAI DAVID-JUDEA

Shabbat Shorts

Last time on Shabbat Shorts we asked:

Can the chazzan drink the wine after reciting the "relic" Kiddush [in shul on Friday night]? After all, since he is not *dining* in shul, he cannot fulfill his mitzvah of Kiddush in shul, as Kiddush can only be fulfilled "in the place of dining". And if he is not fulfilling the mitzvah of Kiddush, then it is forbidden for him to drink at all, for one may not eat or drink on Friday night prior to fulfilling the mitzvah of Kiddush! So what will become of the wine? This certainly creates an awkward situation!

In response to this Halachic quandary, the Shulchan Aruch recommends the familiar practice of offering the wine (grape juice) to a child. This recommendation sets off an absolutely fascinating debate within the following generations of Halachic decisors. Some hold that the child who is asked to drink must specifically be below "the age of *chinuch*" (instruction in Mitzvot), i.e. below the age of 6 or 7. Why? Because if the child has already reached the age of *chinuch*, she should already be learning that one doesn't drink before hearing Kiddush at home! On the other hand, others argue that nothing is gained by giving the wine/grape juice to a child who hasn't reached the age of *chinuch*, for if the purpose is to avoid a *ברכה לבטלה* (through having someone actually drink), this someone would have to be someone who is old enough to appreciate what a *bracha* is, not someone too young to really understand it! And while it is the latter opinion which wins the day ultimately, and a child of at least 6 or 7 should be sought, the catch-22 is an interesting one!

The question also arises of course as to what to do if no children are present (At BDJ, we just become Rav Hai Gaon and Tosafot followers and omit the Kiddush under these circumstances.) There are opinions (cited in the Mishna Brurah) that the chazzan should drink the wine, to make sure to drink an entire רביעית, (about 3.3 ounces) and to rely upon the Gaonic ruling that drinking a רביעית of wine qualifies as "dining", thus enabling the chazzan to fully fulfill the Mitzvah of Kiddush fully right there and then.

So that's the story of this "relic" of Friday night davening. And relic though it may be, it reminds us well of the deep value of extending hospitality to wayfarers, and of opening our homes and tables to folks who are passing through town over Shabbat.

I love feedback!
ravyosef@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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