



B'NAI DAVID-JUDEA

Shabbat Shorts

As we continue our exploration of Havdalah, let's specifically look at what beverages can be in our Havdalah cups.

Ideally, Havdalah is said over wine. Unlike Kiddush, Havdalah may not be said on bread, and so in a case in which a person only has enough wine for either Shabbat Kiddush or Havdalah, one should save the wine for Havdalah since Kiddush can be said over bread (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chayim 296:4). It's that important!

But in a situation where wine (or grape juice) is not available at all, what should we do?

Havdalah can be said over *chamar medinah*, which (as we discussed in our learning about Kiddush) is limited to drinks that people drink together socially (beer, alcoholic drinks, and even coffee or tea when alcohol is unavailable). When *chamar medinah* is used, 'shehakol' is the blessing recited.

The Mishnah Berurah explains that *chamar medinah* specifically does not include drinks that are not usually drunk throughout the year, like certain liquors for Pesach. And he also quotes the Shaarei Teshuvah citing the Birkei Yosef that drinks like milk and oil that are not regularly drunk should not be used either (Orach Chayim 296:2:9). And he concludes that everyone agrees that water may not be used *משום דלא חשיב*, "because it's not an important drink" (ibid:10).

Given that Pesach is coming up, we will end with a timely halacha in our discussion. The Rama explains: *נהגו להבדיל במוצאי פסח על שכר ולא על יין משום*, "We have the practice to recite Havdalah over beer and not over wine on the night after Pesach because beer is more desirable at that time".

Beer is of course more desirable because it was chametz and prohibited during Pesach!

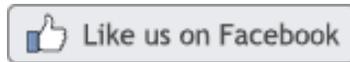
This fascinating example gives us a window into why what goes into our Havdalah cups matters so much. We are supposed to desire it-- to appreciate it. We enter and exit sacred time with drinks that not only quench our thirst, but that also remind us how enjoyable God's world and our lives can be.

Stay tuned for next time on Shabbat Shorts when we will explore what putting Havdalah wine on our eyes is all about...!!

I love feedback!
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