



B'NAI DAVID-JUDEA

Shabbat Shorts

As we move from candle lighting to Kiddush, I'm going to begin with something of a Kiddush pet peeve of mine.

The Talmud presumes Friday night Kiddush to be the fulfillment of the Biblical command "Remember the Shabbat day, to sanctify it". The word "Remember" is understood to mean "verbally acknowledge", and the verse as a whole is understood as commanding us to verbally articulate the sanctified nature of the day, preferably as close to the onset of the day as possible. And while in principle we could compose whatever verbal formula we desired in order to fulfill this Biblical mandate, the Sages did us the favor of establishing a fixed text - the text of Kiddush as we know it - which immediately became the de facto form for the fulfillment of this Mitzvah. And in a parallel creative move, the Sages also ordained that we elevate the stature of this acknowledgement of Shabbat's sanctity by performing it over wine.

So far, so good. What's my peeve? Well, at a Friday night dinner as which multiple people are gathered, most of the assembled typically don't recite Kiddush. They instead utilize the common Halachic tool "hearing is the equivalent of reciting", just as we do for the reading of Megillah and, in the old days, we did for the recitation of the Amidah. The problem is that in order for our *hearing* Kiddush to be regarded as the equivalent of our *reciting* it ourselves, we need to hear the entire text of the Kiddush from the reciter's mouth. This goal is often compromised by the very beautiful custom of everyone together singing *כי בנו בחרת ואותנו קדשת*. As a result of the communal

singing, the Kiddush leader's voice often becomes individually indistinguishable, and is no longer *heard*.

Now, you could counter-argue that if you are yourself one of the singers, then you are relying upon the leader for most of the text, and then upon yourself for the section that you are singing. After all, we DO employ that logic when it comes to Megillah (i.e. if you miss a few words from the reader, you may fill in these words by reading them yourself). True, but in the case of Megillah this is effective only if you are yourself also fully "ritually equipped", i.e. you are also reading from a kosher Megillah. In the Kiddush case, this would translate into each of the assembled singers themselves holding a glass of wine with the minimum requisite 3+ oz. in it, which isn't always the case. And beyond this, **it is highly questionable whether the analogy to Megillah ultimately holds up altogether**, as the rules for reading a scriptural text and those for reciting a bracha may very well be different, with the latter requiring a higher degree of integrity.

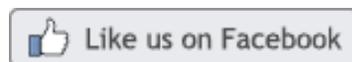
Bottom line: If your family loves singing that part of Kiddush all together, then the simplest thing to do is for the leader to NOT sing that part together with the assembled, rather to pause, and to *afterward* say / sing those words. Alternatively, everyone assembled can hold a full Kiddush cup, and all sing the *entire Kiddush* together.

There you have it. Thanks for indulging me :).

I love feedback!
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