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What does wine have to do with kiddush and havdalah?

By the same token one can ask what does wine have to do with a *b'ris*, a wedding ceremony or *bentching*. Actually, the above occasions would have been just as permissible with or without wine. However, *Chazal* wanted to add a measure of majesty to these ceremonies and incorporated a *b'racha* over wine.

Wine is an important beverage, so much so that the *b'racha* over wine was modified from *boreh p'ri ha'eitz* to *boreh p'ri hagofen*. By praising *Hashem* for creating wine on these special occasions, we add dignity to the ceremony. Many *Rishonim* are of the opinion that drinking the wine is of secondary importance with the main issue being the reciting of the *b'racha*.¹

For these reasons the *kiddush* or *havdala* is recited over a cup of wine.

What can be used instead of wine or grape juice?

There is a difference between the *kiddush* on Friday night and Shabbos day.

On Friday night: –

- one should make *kiddush* over wine or grape juice.²

It is permissible for the person reciting the *kiddush* to take a sip of the wine or grape juice and have someone else down the remainder of the required volume. However, it is desirable that the one who recites the *kiddush* should himself drink the required amount.³

If one is unable to take even a sip of the wine or grape juice, someone else should recite the *kiddush* and drink the required volume of *kiddush* wine or grape juice.⁴ A person should not recite the *kiddush* if there is no intention of sipping the wine or grape juice.

If nobody is available to drink the wine or grape juice, or if one is not able to obtain wine or grape juice:

- one should recite *kiddush* over the *challas* (we will see later *b'ezras Hashem* how this is done), which is preferred to reciting *kiddush* over other beverages.⁵

If one is without wine or *challas*:

- one should recite the *kiddush* over "the drink of the land – *cheimar medinah*". Rav Moshe Feinstein *ztz"l* writes⁶ that "the drink of the land" is of such importance that it is offered to guests or consumed at meals and not (only) consumed to quench thirst. Beer and 100% fruit juices might fit the bill.

Summarizing the order of preference for the Friday night *kiddush*: wine or grape juice, *challas*, drink of the land.

On Shabbos day – the order of preference is different:

Wine or grape juice, the drink of the land,⁷ *challas*.

Why is there a difference between Friday night and Shabbos day?

¹ We see in the *Rishonim* that the *b'racha* over the wine is considered *shira* – praise.

² *Simon* 272, several *se'ifim*.

³ Based on the *Ge'onim* in *simon* 271:14.

⁴ Based on *M"B* 272:33 and *SS"K* 53:5.

⁵ *M"B* 272:27.

⁶ *Iggros Moshe Orach Chaim* vol. II *simon* 75.

⁷ *M"B* *simon* 272:29. *SS"K* 53:9 and footnote 34.

First we must appreciate that on Friday night, aside from reciting *Vayechulu*, we also recite the *b'racha* of *kiddush* (after the *Boreh p'ri hagofen*). On Shabbos day we do not recite *kiddush*, we only recite the *Boreh p'ri hagofen*. (Although many have the custom to recite various *pesukim* before the *Boreh p'ri hagofen*, this does not constitute *kiddush* and even if one was to omit them altogether, one's *kiddush* would still be valid).

Based on that, on Shabbos day, if one does not have wine or grape juice and one commences the meal by reciting the *hamotzi* over the *challo*s, the meal would appear to be the same as a regular weekday meal. This is because one commences a weekday meal with *hamotzi*. It is the *b'racha* recited over wine or grape juice, or at least over "the drink of the land", that lends the meal its special nature of festivity.

The *b'racha* of *kiddush* on Friday night sets the meal apart from a weekday meal and consequently when *kiddush* is recited over the *challo*s, it is still unique and different from a weekday meal.

*How is *kiddush* recited over *challo*s?*

It is less complicated than it seems.⁸ The host, household and guests wash hands before *kiddush*. The two *challo*s are covered before *Vayechulu* and one places both hands over the cover during the *Vayechulu*. After *Vayechulu*, one exposes the *challo*s, places one's hands on them and recites the *birkas hamotzi*. They are covered again and the *kiddush* is recited while placing one's hands over the *challo*s. After the *kiddush* one breaks the bread and eats at least a *kazayis*.⁹ On Shabbos day, if no wine or "drink of the land" is available, one should say "זכור את יום השבת לקדשו" before reciting the *hamotzi* over the *challo*s.¹⁰

*Is one permitted to drink or eat before *kiddush*?*

⁸ Based on the *SS"K* 53:15. Other *hidurim* are mentioned there, see inside.

⁹ According to R' Chaim Na'eh – 28ml, 0.94 fl.oz.(US). The *Chazon Ish* – 50 ml, 1.69 fl.oz.(US).

¹⁰ HaRav Moshe Sternbuch *shlita*.

The *Shulchan Aruch* says¹¹ that one may not eat or drink before *kiddush*, night or day.¹² This includes even a small amount of water. If one is thirsty, one should recite the *kiddush* in the regular manner over wine or grape juice and only then eat or drink. The reason for this is because the main time point to recite the *kiddush* is at the onset of Shabbos and therefore one should not eat or drink beforehand.¹³

Vort on the Parsha

The *Midrash Tanchumah* (*Emor* 14) says that in the future, the only *korban* that will be offered will be the *Todah*. Rav Sternbuch explains that with Moshiach amidst us and with everyone adhering to the Torah, *Hashem* will shield us from even an unintentional sin and negate the need for *korbanos* as atonement.

The *Todah* however will be much in demand when people appreciate all that *Hashem* does and has done for them.

Food For Thought

*Must all the participants partake of the *kiddush* wine?*

*What if the wine spills before being consumed, must *kiddush* be recited again?*

Which meal should be more elaborate, the night meal or the day one?

*May one dally between the *kiddush* and the meal?*

Answers coming be" H next week.

¹¹ *Simon* 271:4.

¹² *Simon* 289:1.

¹³ See *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* 271:9 and *M"B* 271:11.