

Kiddush and Havdalah Over Beer

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Source Sheet by Joshua Kulp

Pesachim 107a

Mar Yanuka and Mar Kashisha sons of Rav H̄isda said to Rav Ashi: Once Ameimar happened to come to our place and we did not have wine for *havdala*. We brought him beer and he did not recite *havdala*, and he passed the night fasting, as it is prohibited to eat before *havdala*. The next day we exerted ourselves and brought him wine, and he recited *havdala* and tasted some food. The next year he again happened to come to our place. Once again we did not have wine and we brought him beer. He said: If so, beer is the wine of the province. He recited *havdala* over the beer and tasted some food.

One may learn from Ameimar's conduct three *halakhot*: Learn from it that one who recites *havdala* in the prayer service must recite *havdala* again over a cup. And learn from it that it is prohibited for a person to eat before he recites *havdala*. And learn from it that one who did not recite *havdala* at the conclusion of Shabbat may recite *havdala* anytime during the entire week.

Rav Huna raised a dilemma before Rav H̄isda: What is the *halakha* with regard to whether it is permitted to recite *kiddush* over date beer? He said: Now, if with regard to barley beer, fig beer, and beer produced from berries, I raised a dilemma before Rav and Rav before Rabbi H̄iyya, and Rabbi H̄iyya had inquired of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi, and he did not resolve it for him, is it necessary to say that date beer, which is inferior to those other types of beer, may not be used for *kiddush*? Those who heard this response understood from it that it is *kiddush* that one may not recite over it, but one may recite *havdala* over date beer. Rav H̄isda said to them that Rav said as follows: Just as one may not recite *kiddush* over date beer, so one may not recite *havdala* over it.

It was also stated that Rav Taḥalifa bar Avimi said that Shmuel said: Just as one may not recite *kiddush* over date beer, so one may not recite *havdala* over it.

Levi sent Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi a beer of thirteen soakings.

Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi tasted it and it was especially pleasant. He said: A beer like this is fit to recite *kiddush* over and to say upon it all the songs and praises in the world, as it is as good as wine.

At night, it disrupted his digestion and caused him pain. He said: It pains on the one hand and soothes on the other.

Rav Yosef said: I will take a vow in public, which cannot be nullified, that I will not drink beer.

Rava said: I would rather drink water used for soaking flax, and I will not drink beer. And Rava said: One who recites *kiddush* over beer, his regular drink should be beer.

Rav was found by Rav Huna reciting *kiddush* over beer. He said to him: Abba, has started to acquire coins with beer.

The Sages taught: One may recite *kiddush* only over wine, and one may recite blessings only over wine. The Gemara expresses surprise: **Is that to say that one does not say the blessing: By Whose word all things [*shehakol*] came to be, over beer and water? Abaye said: This is what the *baraita* is saying: One only says: Bring a cup of blessing to recite the blessing of Grace after Meals, over wine.**

The Rabbis taught in a *baraita*: One may not recite *kiddush* over beer. In the name of Rabbi Elazar, son of Rabbi Shimon, they said that one may recite *kiddush* over beer.

Mishneh Torah, Sabbath 29:17

Wine that smells like vinegar but tastes like wine, one may recite kiddush over it. So too wine mixed with water. So too raisin wine, one may recite kiddush over it, as long as the raisins had some moisture, that if one were to tread them, their "honey" would come out. So too new wine directly from the press, one may recite kiddush over it. In a region most of whose wine is "beer" even though one may not use it for kiddush, one may recite havdalah over it, since it is "the wine of the region."

Tosafot on Pesachim 106b

We need to inquire whether one can recite kiddush over beer when it is the "wine of the region" just as they recite havdalah. And the whole passage that prohibits reciting kiddush over beer we can say refers to a case where it is not the "wine of the region."

Know, that since Rav said, "Just as one does not recite kiddush [over beer] so too one does not recite havdalah." But if it is the wine of the region, obviously one may recite havdalah....

The conclusion is that one can recite havdalah over beer if it is "the wine of the region" but one cannot over bread.

And according to Rabbenu Tam one cannot recite kiddush either over bread.

But we still need to ask whether one can recite kiddush over beer.

Rosh on Pesachim 10:17:1

The next year he again happened to come to our place. Once again we did not have wine and we brought him beer. He said: If so, beer is the wine of the province. He recited *havdala* over the beer and tasted some food.

The Rashbam explained: This "wine of the region" is in a case where there is no wine in this city, only beer. Therefore, they can recite havdalah over it. And this is the halakhah. And this is the halakhah. But one cannot recite havdalah over water even if there is no wine and no beer. Others explain [that wine of the region] is when wine is not grown a day's travel around the city....

Rabbenu Yitzchak seems to incline to say that one can recite kiddush over beer if it is the "wine of the region."

Tur, Orach Chaim 272

Rav Hai [10th century] also wrote that even if he has wine, if he does not like it and it is not dear to him to recite kiddush over it, he should not recite a blessing over something he does not enjoy.

And my father, the Rosh, ruled that one can do havdalah over beer if it is the wine of the region.

Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chayim 296:2

One does not make havdalah on bread, but one does make havdalah on beer if it is the wine of the region and this is the rule also for other drinks apart from water.

Rema: and it is better to make havdalah on a bad cup of wine than on beer. And people have the practice of making havdalah at the end of Passover on shekhar and not wine, because it is more beloved to them.

Turei Zahav on Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chayim 272:6

It is better to make kiddush on beer: but in a place where wine is found, one should certainly bless on wine even in the day. But, nevertheless, if wine is expensive, like in these regions, one should not go above and beyond by using wine, since it is not a full obligation like there is an obligation at night, and it is sufficient for that.

And for this reason, even the great rabbis in our regions are not accustomed to bless on wine during the day, and one who also blesses on wine in the day, certainly does it the best way, as is explained above.

Shulkhan Arukh Harav

Even if the majority of the inhabitants of the town only drink it [wine] at certain times, because of its importance, like mead in these regions, that does not make it inadmissible for making grace after meals or kiddush on it, since it is because of its importance--that it is more important than shekhar, and therefore it is more suitable for the cup of blessing than shekhar and is also more strongly hamar medina because it is more important.

Because, the virtue of wine is only because of its importance, and not because it constitutes the majority of drink by most people in those places where it is found. Because even in places where other drinks are drunk the most, even so, the best way to do the mitzvah is on wine because of its importance. Therefore the more important a drink is, the closer it is to wine.

R. Moshe Feinstein, Igrot Moseh 2:65

Concerning drinks like soda, do they have the status of "wine of the region" in order that one could recite kiddush over them in the morning and havdalah over them.

The correct practice in my mind is that they are like water, for even though they drink them in important meals and they treat them with respect, drinking them is just like drinking water to quench one's thirst or to cool off on hot days. Their importance is only when one needs to cool off, and cold water is also important when needed.

The importance of a drink is expressed when it is drunk not because one needs it for thirst but rather when one drinks it even when one does not need it, but rather for the importance of the meal or the visitors.

For no one drinks wine or alcohol or beer to quench his thirst, for water is better for this. Rather people drink these beverages because they are enjoyable, and these are the types of beverages that are called "wine of the region."

Melomdei Milhama, p.206 (R' Nahum Eliezer Rabinovitch, b. 1928)

Therefore, IMHO, it seems clear that soft drinks like soda, etc. have the same rule apply to them as "wine of the region", because many more people drink them than drink wine, even though wine is found (matzui) here.



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