

## What is a Kiddush Cup?

Next to lighting candles on Friday just before sunset, or singing Shalom Aleichem, the Kiddush cup is among the most common symbols of the Jewish Sabbath. The word Kiddush is derived from the Hebrew word Kedushah, which means holiness or separation. Reciting Kiddush marks the special nature of the Sabbath day.

In traditional Judaism, the Sabbath is considered to be set apart from the rest of the days of the week. The Torah commands "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." Kiddush is a ceremony which marks the holiness of the Sabbath. The Talmud understands this to mean that the holiness of the Sabbath must be stated verbally.

Reciting it is considered a positive commandment. Men and women are obligated to recite it. While the recitation is the most important element, a custom dating from the early rabbinic period sees the Sabbath as being sanctified over a glass of wine before the evening meal. The drinking of wine, in addition to the recitation of some additional paragraphs makes up Kiddush.

According to the Talmud, Kiddush can be traced back to the time of the Great Assembly. The existence of discussions dating from the first century of the Common Era on the subject of Kiddush make it clear that the ritual is ancient.

On Friday evening, two loaves of bread are laid on the table in memory of the double portion of manna that was gathered on Friday. For most communities, there is no true Kiddush except at the place where the meal is eaten. Some communities do pronounce Kiddush at the end of the evening service in the synagogue.

Although the Talmud states that strong drink other than wine is improper for the Kiddush, they often out of necessity, took the place of wine in many northeastern European Jewish communities. It is regarded as more appropriate to recite the Kiddush over the bread than to substitute beer or brandy if wine is not accessible.

Before these benedictions it is customary to recite Genesis 2: 1-3, the account of the Sabbath of Creation, in obedience to the saying of the Talmud that one who recites it makes himself, in a sense, a partner with God in the work of creation.

A kiddush cup is used in other ceremonies where drinking wine is part of the occasion or ritual. These include Havdalah (the ceremony demarcating the end of the Sabbath from the coming week), as well as at wedding ceremonies, among others.

## About the Author

Jacob Lumbroso writes articles on history, foreign cultures, and Judaism. For [Silver Shabbat Kiddush Cups](#) or other Judaica related to the Shabbat, visit <http://www.judaicaquest.com>

Source: <http://www.readezarchive.com>