

## CURRENT TALMUD PASSAGE

### "A TALMUD TALE" PREMIERED FEBRUARY IN HOUSTON, TX!

The musical was an enormous hit! If you'd like a dvd of the show, please send a [contribution](#) of \$18 for an enjoyable, entertaining and inspiring look at the world of the Talmud!

Posted January 6, 2008, by Rabbi Judy Abrams. Please refer to Maqom's home page for information about previous passages.

**BH**

## A YEAR OF YERUSHALMI! HOW'S YOUR KIDDUSH CUP?

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Dear Friends,

The Yerushalmi, the Talmud produced in the Land of Israel, is something like the ugly sister who never gets any attention when compared with the Bavli, the Talmud of Babylonia. So this new year, we'll attempt to address that wrong. The Yerushalmi has glories to rival the Bavli's...so let's get started! (She ends up being quite as pretty as her sister!)

We'll begin with something that just about every Jew owns: a Kiddush cup. Whether you got it when you were 13 or when you were getting married or you collect them, the Yerushalmi has this to say about it:

The earlier sages asked: Can the left hand help the right hand hold the Kiddush cup when we are saying the blessing? We learn from this question three things:

You must hold the cup in your right hand.

You must hold your hand up at least a handbreadth above the table.

You must pay attention to the cup while saying the blessing it (i.e., you don't set it down to check the oven, for instance).

Said Rav Aha: Three things were said concerning the Kiddush cup:

It must be full.

It must be decorated.

It must be clean. (Y. Berachot 7:5)

### Discussion Questions:

First some words on the Yerushalmi. There are two versions: the Venice edition which has all the tractates in one volume and the P'nei Moshe edition in 7 volumes. The latter looks more like a page of Bavli. However, always, in the Yerushalmi, a mishnah is called a halachah, so if you're looking into the actual text itself, don't let that trip you up.

The only complete translation of the Yerushalmi into English is edited by Jacob Neusner, entitled, The Talmud of the Land of Israel, in 35 volumes from University of Chicago Press. You can buy individual volumes, so you can go for the tractates which most interest you. Finally, the Yerushalmi has Talmud on Mishnah tractates that the Bavli does not...so we're in for a fun ride!

Now, to the questions:

1. How does your cup stand up to these standards? (I was appalled, thinking how much silver polishing I'm going to have to do to bring ours up to snuff!)
2. Why do you think the cup had to be decorated?
3. Why must you hold the cup in your right hand? Why do you have to hold it up?

Enjoy!