

Revenge of Dinah: Kadesh

Contributed by [JUF Chicago / DePaul - Research Training Internship](#)

Source: Revenge of Dinah: A Feminist Seder on Rape Culture in the Jewish Community

According to the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, at least 5% of American women have been sexually assaulted in adolescence or adulthood and that 18% have been raped. Furthermore, at least 20% of American men report having perpetrated sexual assault and 5% report having committed rape. The same studies report that approximately 50% of college women have been sexually assaulted, and 27% have experienced rape or attempted rape; in contrast, 25% of college men have committed sexual assault, and 8% have committed rape or attempted rape. **At least one-half of all violent crimes involve alcohol consumption by the perpetrator, the victim, or both.** Researchers consistently find that approximately one-half of all sexual assaults are committed by men who have been drinking alcohol. Similarly, approximately one-half of all sexual assault victims report that they were drinking alcohol at the time of the assault, with estimates ranging from 30-79%

In recognition of the role alcohol plays in these devastating statistics, **we encourage the guests of this Seder to replace wine with grape juice (even if you are 21 years of age or older) in a demonstration of solidarity with survivors and victims.** We also want to emphasize that although one's alcohol consumption may place them at increased risk of sexual assault, they are in no way responsible for the assault. The perpetrators are legally and morally responsible for their behavior.

Fill your first cup with grape juice.

The name Kiddush comes from the verb **קִדְּשׁ** (*kiddush*) to be consecrated, hallowed or sanctified. One of the traditional purposes of Kiddush is to drink wine to proclaim holiness. But the unavoidable truth is that we, as human beings, are not

inherently holy. At least, not in the way we're used to thinking about holiness. We all have potential within us for committing acts of **sexist oppression, victimization, degradation, and even sexual violence**, whether benevolent or hostile. People who have done these things are not fundamentally different from everyone else, no matter how much we would like to believe otherwise. We are not holy, in the way that God is holy, or angels are holy. Instead, we have something that these 'holy' beings do not— free will, the power to choose between what's right and what's wrong. Or sometimes, what's right, and what everyone else is doing, what an entire society is routinely condoning without a thought. However, the Torah does consistently refer to Jews as holy, separate, "chosen". **As a table, share some thoughts on what it means to be holy and exercise free choice while living in a culture that permits and even reinforces slut-shaming, victim-blaming, trivialization of violence, and "locker room talk".**

Lean to the left and recite the following. Then, drink your first cup of grape juice.

Brukah et Adonai Eloheynu Melech ha'olam boray p'ri hagafen.

You are blessed, Our God, Spirit of the World, who creates the fruit of the vine.