

# Shoel U'Mashiv

## Sit Or Stand for Havdalah?

Rabbi Noah Whittenburg

**Q** - “Is it better for me to sit or stand when reciting *Havdalah*?”

**A** - Should one sit or stand when reciting *Kiddush*?

The *Shulchan Aruch O.C.* 271:10 says that one should recite *Kiddush* standing up. The *Rema* there says one can stand when reciting *Kiddush*, but it's better to sit. The *Mishnah Berurah* 271:45 explains the *Shulchan Aruch* that the reason to stand is because it is *Eidus* (testimony) and *Eidus* needs to be said standing up. Similarly, we stand for *Vayechulu* on Friday night because it is *Eidus*. The *Mishnah Berurah* 271:45 explains the *Rema* that the reason to sit is because we have a requirement of *Kiddush B'Makom Seudah* (to make *Kiddush* in the place one is going to have their meal). Therefore, he says that by sitting it shows that this is where they are going to eat their *Seudah*. He gives a second reason that since one person is making for everyone, they need to establish themselves as a group and by sitting together it establishes them as a group.

Should one sit or stand when reciting *Havdalah*?

The *Shulchan Aruch O.C.* 296:6 says to sit for *Havdalah*. The *Rema* adds that some say to stand. *Rebbe Akiva Eiger* in *Knesses HaGedolah* 4 on the *Beis Yosef* 296 explains that according to the opinion that says to stand for *Kiddush*, the group is established naturally by standing in the place where the meal is going to take place, but *Havdalah* doesn't have a natural establishment and therefore it is better to sit to establish themselves as a group. He says according to the opinion that says to sit for *Kiddush* it is because *B'Makom Seudah* is only accomplished by being in the place you are going to eat, which is sitting at the table, but *Havdalah* doesn't require *B'Makom Seudah* and so it is better to stand out of respect.

What should our friend do?

Really, they should do what their father does. We have a rule that *Minhag Avoseinu Torah Hi*—the customs of fathers (and forefathers) are as binding upon us as the Torah itself. However, in a case where one does not have a set *Minhag*, then the basic rule is that a Sephardi should follow that which the *Shulchan Aruch* says to do, and an Ashkenazi should follow that which the *Rema* says to do.