

OU CALLS FOR END TO KIDDUSH CLUBS

LEADERS OF THE ORTHODOX UNION have called on all synagogues to completely eliminate Kiddush Clubs. This nationwide initiative will be launched on **Shabbat Parshat Mishpatim, February 5, 2005**. Recent years, says the OU, have seen the growth of these “clubs,” in which congregants leave shul during the *haftarah* reading to make Kiddush, often on hard liquor.

Citing the negative impact on synagogue services that these clubs have, the OU points out that the synagogue serves as a *mikdash me’at*—a place for prayer and *kedusha*, sanctity. Any behavior that detracts from the *kedushat beit haknesset* is insulting to the entire congregation.

These clubs also have a harmful influence on young people, because of their idealization of alcohol. This is particularly disturbing, says the OU, because it is emblematic of the larger dangers of alcohol consumption and substance abuse in our community.

Rabbis have responded enthusiastically to the OU’s call, echoing the urgent need to restore dignity to the shul and to combat the abuse of liquor and other substances. Indeed, the OU intends to widen the campaign in the near future to include “**Safe Homes, Safe Shuls, Safe Schools.**”

The Orthodox Union is assisting synagogues by providing educational materials, workshops, scholars-in-residence, and other programming to creatively and comprehensively address these issues.

As Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb, Executive Vice President of the Orthodox Union, has put it, “Since the influences of the world around us inevitably invade our *dalet amot*—we as a community can sweep this behavior under the rug, or we can isolate it and respond to it. We have chosen to respond.”

More information can be obtained from the Orthodox Union by calling 212.613.8225 or emailing: safeshuls@ou.org.



Orthodox Union

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