

## Havdalah:

### The Obligation:

1. Rambam writes that the command of "Zachor Es Yom HaShabbos" includes the positive Biblical mitzvahs of Kiddush and Havdalah every week. Many commentaries agree with Rambam. However, other commentaries hold that Havdalah is Rabbinic. Mishna Brurah quotes both opinions and adds that if one said Havdalah in Maariv the Havdalah on the wine is certainly Rabbinic.
2. On Saturday night, in the fourth Bracha of the Amida of Maariv, one should add in the paragraph of *Atta Chonantanu* which serves partially as Havdalah.
3. Even if one happened to say Havdalah on a cup before praying Maariv, he would recite *Atta Chonantanu* in the shemoneh esrei.
4. The havdalah ceremony should be made at nightfall. Nightfall is defined as the time when it is sufficiently dark to be able to see three medium-bright stars. This time can range anywhere between 42-90 minutes,
5. There's a dispute whether women are obligated in Havdalah. According to Sephardim, women may make it for themselves. Some Ashkenazim hold that women should not recite Havdalah for themselves, while many others say that if a woman can not find someone to hear Havdalah from, or the only person available to say it for her already fulfilled his obligation, she should recite Havdalah for herself. (she should ideally give the wine to a minor boy who is at least 5-6 years old.)
6. If a woman has not yet fulfilled her Havdalah obligation, but her husband has, he should ideally not repeat it for her. Instead, she should say it on her own. However, if for some reason the woman is unable to do it for herself and there is no other man present who has not fulfilled his Havdalah obligation, the husband may recite it for her.
7. Once a child has reached the age of Chinuch (5 or 6) the parents should train him in hearing havdalah.
8. Before one says Havdalah, one may not do any Melacha. If one made Havdalah during Ma'ariv, one may do Melacha. If one needs to do Melacha before saying Havdalah in Ma'ariv, one should say "Baruch HaMavdil Ben Kodesh LeChol" (which is not a bracha) and then do Melacha.
9. However, one may not eat until one made Havdalah over a cup of wine.
10. There's no an issue of asking a non-religious Jew ( e.g. a taxi driver who has not made Havdalah) to do work for you after Shabbos, since they aren't going to say Havdalah anyway, the prohibition not to do work before Havdalah doesn't set in.
11. If one has an extreme need such as a need to travel to the end of the Techum for the purpose of a mitzvah after Shabbat one may pray Ma'ariv starting from Plag Mincha (ten and three quarter hours into the day). In such a case one may also say Havdalah early but one may not say the Bracha on the candle (Meorei HaEsh). Even in such a case it is certainly forbidden to do Melacha until nightfall.
12. If one forgot to say Havdalah on Motzei Shabbat one can say it until Tuesday. However, no blessing is said on the fire or the besamim.
13. It is highly questionable whether a person may fulfill his Havdalah obligation by listening to it over the telephone.

### **The Order of & What to Use for Havdalah:**

1. According to Sephardim, one should sit during Havdalah. However, the Ashkenazic minhag is to stand during Havdalah.
2. The order of the Brachos of Havdalah is Yayin (Hagefen), Besamim, Ner (Meorei HaEish), Havdalah (Hamavdil).
3. The custom is to add several pesukim prior to Havdalah for a good sign. Ashkenazim and Sephardim have different texts in this regard.
4. As a sign of blessing, the wine should overflow when it is poured into the cup.
5. Havdalah should be recited in the traditional chant, as we bid farewell to our Shabbos guest. An important guest is escorted to the door and sent on his way with singing.
6. To fulfill the mitzvah of Havdalah by listening to another's berachos, one must look at the wine and at the flame, so his thoughts are not diverted.
7. If one has wine, wine has precedence over any other drink. Red wine should be used, but white wine is permissible if only white wine is available.
8. One may use grape juice for Havdalah.
9. If one doesn't have wine or grape juice, then one should use Chamar Medina, such as beer, liquor or cognac. There are lenient opinions who permit one to use soda, coffee, tea, orange juice, lemonade. Water is not allowed for Havdalah.
10. One must drink a minimum of a cheekful of wine for Havdalah to be valid. However, it is preferable to drink a Revi"z of wine so that the concluding brooch of "Al HaGefen" can be recited.
11. Anyone listening to Havdalah may drink the wine. This is in contrast to Kiddush where it is preferable for the person who recites it to drink the wine himself.
12. At Havdalah, only one person should drink the wine in contrast to Kiddush, where it is preferable that each listener drink some wine, so that the one person can make the blessing after drinking the wine.
13. If the only person capable of reciting Havdalah is someone who cannot drink that much wine, then he should recite Havdalah, taste a sip of the wine, and then give it to another person who can drink a cheekful. He should inform that person beforehand that he should have in mind when listening to the blessing of boreh peri hagefen that he will drink from the cup afterward.
14. Women customarily do not drink from the Havdalah wine.
15. It is preferable that the listeners not speak until a cheekful has been consumed. Nevertheless, if they did, they have still fulfilled their obligation.
16. The Ashkenaz minhag is to make Boreh Minei Besamim (בורא מיני בשמים) which is the general Bracha for nice smells at Havdalah no matter what's being used for besamim. It is ideal to smell something that initially has this blessing, such as cloves. However, according to Sephardim, one should make the appropriate Bracha for that besamim.
17. One may use any spice found in the kitchen (e.g. cinnamon). In practice, most people set aside a special container of spices to be used for Havdalah only.
18. One who used a container of spice that had lost its fragrance did not fulfill his obligation.

19. Preferably one should use a torch, i.e., a multi-wicked candle so that significant amount of light is produced. A torch is defined as the object created by the joining of the flames of two or more wicks. Thus, two single-wicked candles or even two matches constitute a torch if they are held at an angle to each other so that they form a single flame.
20. If a torch is unavailable, one may recite the brocha over a single flame.
21. A person needs to be able to benefit from the fire in order to recite the bracha over it. Therefore, some turn off the electric lights when making Havdalah, but others hold that the strict halacha doesn't require turning off the lights.
22. Some poskim allow one to use an electric light in place of a Havdala candle in a time of need. Nevertheless, there are those authorities who discourage the use of an electric light for Havdala. Even among the authorities who permit the use of electric lighting when needed many would disqualify the use of coloured and fluorescent bulbs as they work differently than standard light bulbs.
23. Ideally, one should be close enough to the flame to derive benefit from its light ( e.g. distinguish between two coins). Therefore, it is customary to look at one's fingernails, as the ability to distinguish fingernails from the the flesh on one's fingers is comparable to distinguishing between two different coins. Some have the custom of looking at their fingernails and then reciting the brocha, while other say the brocha first.
24. The custom of looking at the fingernails is performed as follows: The fingers of the right hand are bent into the palm of the hand, resting them on the thumb. One looks at their nails, at their surrounding skin, and at the palm of the hand. Then one extends the fingers and gazes once again at his nails. Some also repeat this procedure with the left hand.

### **Summary of the Havdalah Procedure:**

1. The person making Havdalah holds the cup of wine in his right hand and the Besamim in his left hand. Someone else holds the havdalah candle or it is affixed in a holder.
2. Say preliminary prayers.
3. When the leader reaches the verse, "Layehudim hayesah orah," he pauses, and the assembled chant the phrase in a loud voice, including the phrase "Kein tiyeh lanu." He then repeats the verses and continues
4. Make the blessing on the wine.
5. Put Besamim down on the table.
6. Put the kiddush cup in your left hand (do NOT put it on the table.)
7. Take the Besamim in your right hand.
8. Make the blessing on the Besamim and then smell them.
9. Put the Besamim down on the table.
10. Make the blessing on the fire and benefit from it.
11. Put cup of wine into your right hand.
12. Make the final blessing of Havdalah.
13. Drink a Rivi'is of wine.
14. Put out the fire with the wine.

15. It is customary to daub the eyelids with the leftover wine in the plate. Some people daub the eyelids three times while saying the verse, "The command of Hashem is clear, enlightening the eyes." (Tehillim 19:9) There are those who place drops of Havdalah wine in their pockets, saying, "Siman tov umazal tov -May it be a good sign and a good fortune for us and for all Yisrael. Amen." Others daub the forehead with the Havdalah wine.
16. It is customary to sing the song "Hamavdil bein Kodesh LeChol..." after Havdallah.
17. The Sanzer Rebbe used to say after Havdalah: "A gutte uoch, a gezunte uoch, a mazeldike uoch, a uoch mit yeshuos, a uoch mit refuos, a uoch mit a sach gelt. Have a good week, a healthy week, a successful week, a week of relief from trouble, a week of healing and recovery, a week of earning a lot of money."
18. The Maharil had a special tallis for Shabbos, which he would fold immediately after Shabbos in order to busy himself with a mitzvah following the holy day
19. In many communities, women recite the prayer "Gott fun Avrohom" before Havdalah. Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev wrote that it should be recited three times by men, women, and children, and that this recitation helps assure success in the ensuing week.

#### **Here is the prayer in Yiddish :**

גאט פון אברהם און פון יצחק און יעקב בעהיט דיין ליב פאלק ישראל פון אלעם ביזען אין דיינעם לויב, אז דער ליבער שבת קדש גייט, אז די נואך און דער חדש און דער יאר, זאל אונז (צו) קומען צו אמונה שלמה, צו אמונת חכמים, צו אהבת חברים, צו דבקות הבורא ברוך הוא, מאמין צו זיין בשלש עשרה עקרים שלך, ובגאולה קרובה במהרה בימינו, ובתחתית המיתם ובנבואת משה רבנו עליו השלום. רבונו של עולם: דו ביזט דאך הנותן ליער כח, גיב דיינע ליבע יידישע קינדערליך אויך כח דיר צו לויבען און נאר דיר צו דינען און קיין אנדערן חלילה נישט, און אז די נואך און דער חדש און דער יאר זאל אונז קומען צו געזונט און צו מזל און צו ברכה והצלחה און צו חסד און צו בנני, חיי אריכי ומזוני רויחי וסיעתא דשמיא לנו ולכל ישראל ונאמר אמן.

#### **Transliteration of the most common version:**

Got fin avruhom in fin yitskhok in fin yankev, bahit dayn lib folk yisruayl fin ale bayzn in daynem loyb az der liber shabes koydesh gayt avek. az di vokh in der khoydesh, in dus yor zol inz tsikimen tsi emine shlayme, tsi emines khakhomim, tsi ahaves khavayrim. tsi dvaykes haboyre burikh hi, ma'amin tsi zayn bishloysh esre ikrim shelokh ivigilo shlayme vekroyve bimhayre veyumayni. Ivishkiyas hamaysim. Ivinvies moyshe rabayni olov hashulem.

Riboyne shel oylem! di bist dokh dem noysayn layo'eyf koyekh. Gib dayne libe yidishe kinderlakh oykh koyekh dikh tsi loybn. In nor dikh tsi dinen in kayn andern kholile nisht. In az di vokh in der khoydesh in dus yor zol inz kimen tsi gezint in tsi mazl in tsi brukhe vehatslukhe. In tsi kheysed in tsi bonay khayhe arikhay imzoyne revikhay vesiyato dishmayo luni ilkhoh yisroayl vene'emar, Umayn.

#### **Transliteration of the most common version:**

God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, protect your beloved people Israel from all hurt, in your love. As the beloved holy Sabbath goes away, that the week, and the

month, and the year, should come to us with perfect faith, with faith in the sages, with love and attachment to good friends, to attachment to the blessed Creator, with belief in your thirteen principles of faith, and in the ultimate redemption, may it be soon, and the Resurrection of the dead, and in the prophecy of Moses, our teacher, may he rest in peace.

Lord of the world! You are the one who gives strength to the weak! Give your beloved Israelites more health and strength so we can love you and serve you, only you, and no other, Heaven forbid. And the week, and the month, and the year, should come to us with mercy, and health, and auspiciousness, and blessing, and success, and riches and glory, and to children, and long life, and abundant food, and Divine providence, for us and all Israel, and let us say, Amen.

### **Havdalah in Shul:**

1. The Chazzan or someone else recites Havdalah in the synagogue on behalf of those who have no wine or who will not recite Havdalah for himself in his home. Whoever wishes to can listen to the cantor's Havdalah in the synagogue and fulfill his obligation, even though the listener is not holding a cup of wine. It should be made clear to the congregation, however, that everyone must recite Havdalah at home on behalf of his family members who have not heard it in the synagogue, even though he himself did hear it.
2. The Chazzan must sit down when he recites Havdalah in the synagogue, and all those of the congregation who wish to fulfill their obligation by listening to him must sit while he recites it.
3. If someone is not sure whether or not he will have wine available for Havdalah, or will need to make Havdalah for his wife at home, he should listen to the Chazaan recite Havdalah in the synagogue, but he should stipulate in his mind that he wishes to fulfill his obligation only if he has no wine or a wife at home, but that if he does find wine at home or his wife needs to hear kiddush, he does not wish to fulfill his obligation in the synagogue. Then, if he finds that there is wine available at home, or his wife needs to hear kiddush at home, he may recite Havdalah for himself in accordance with the condition he made.