

# Between Shabbat and Weekday: Understanding Havdalah

Young Israel of West Hartford Parent-Child Learning



Sponsored in loving memory of Dr. Al & Helen Weisel  
גיטל חיה בת יוסף אברהם ועטיע ואברהם שלום בן ניסן אריה ורייזע  
who dedicated their lives to Jewish education, by their family.



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*a service of the*



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# User Guide:

This packet is geared towards children from the ages of four until 6<sup>th</sup> grade to learn with their parents or other family member. On each page, there will be a source for all to learn. On many pages, the sources will be accompanied by guiding questions in different colored boxes, based on age group, to discuss. For the youngest age group, feel free to just focus on the bolded line in the source and the questions. The top boxes are for children 4-6, the middle boxes for children 7-9, and the bottom boxes for children 10-12. These are merely suggestions but feel free to try out the other boxes as well. Please note that there are many possible answers to the questions, and the goal is not to reach one “right” answer.

In this packet, we will explore the havdalah service. We will search for the deeper meaning behind the symbols used in havdalah and explore questions such as- why do we need to smell spices, why do we use a flame, what is the significance of using all five senses in the havdalah service, and what is at the core of havdalah.



# Brachot of Havdalah

Before the blessings, there are nine introductory verses that highlight our hope for a happy and blessing-filled week. One of those verses is said first by those listening and then by the leader:

For the Jews there was light and joy,  
gladness and honor—so let it be  
with us!

לְיִהוּדִים הָיְתָה אוֹרָה וְשִׂמְחָה וְשֵׁשׁ וְיִקָּר  
כֵּן תִּהְיֶה לָנוּ

## Blessing Over Wine: (the leader does not drink from it yet)

Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King  
of the universe, who creates the  
fruit of the vine.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא  
פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן

## Blessing Over Spices: (It is customary for every to smell the spices after this blessing is said)

Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King  
of the universe, who creates various  
kinds of spices.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
בוֹרֵא מִיָּנִי בְשָׂמִים

## Blessing Over Fire: (After the blessing is said, everyone looks at their fingertips using the light of the flame)

Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King  
of the universe, who creates the  
lights of fire.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא  
מְאוּרֵי הָאֵשׁ

## Main Havdalah Text:

Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King  
of the universe, who makes a  
distinction between sacred and  
mundane, between light and  
darkness, between Israel and the  
nations, between the Seventh Day  
and the six workdays. Blessed are  
You, L-rd, who makes a distinction  
between sacred and mundane.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
הַמְבַדִּיל בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ לְחול בֵּין אוֹר לְחֹשֶׁךְ  
בֵּין יִשְׂרָאֵל לְעַמִּים בֵּין יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת  
לְשִׁשֶּׁת יְמֵי הַמַּעֲשֶׂה בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה'  
הַמְבַדִּיל בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ לְחול

The leader then drinks the wine and extinguishes the flame with the rest of the wine.

# The Why Behind the Wine

Rambam (1135-1204) Mishneh Torah Hilchot Shabbat 29:1, 29:6 (Explaining Source for Obligation)

מִצְוַת עֲשֵׂה מִן הַתּוֹרָה לְקַדֵּשׁ אֶת יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת בְּדִבְרִים שְׁנֶאֱמַר (שְׁמוֹת כ ח) "זָכוֹר אֶת יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ".  
כְּלוּמַר זִכְרוּהוּ זִכִּירַת שְׁבַח וְקִדּוּשׁ. וְצִרִיךְ לְזַכְּרוֹ בְּכִנְיָתוֹ וּבִיצִיאָתוֹ. בְּכִנְיָתוֹ בְּקִדּוּשׁ הַיּוֹם וּבִיצִיאָתוֹ בְּהַבְדֵּלָה  
It is biblically mandated positive commandment to sanctify the Sabbath with speech, as it is written (Exodus 20, 7): "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy." i.e. Remember through remembrance of praise and through Kiddush. And it must be remembered when it begins and when it ends. When it begins - with Kiddush, and when it ends - with Havdala.

מִדְּבַרֵי סוּפְרִים לְקַדֵּשׁ עַל הַיַּיִן וְלַהֲבַדִּיל עַל הַיַּיִן

The sages ordained that both the *Kiddush* and the *Havdalah* should be recited over wine.

1. How can you say goodbye to Shabbat when it ends?
2. Activity: Decorate your own cup for havdalah.

1. Why do you think we specifically use wine/grape juice for havdalah?
2. How do you think we should say goodbye to Shabbat?
3. Why would we want to be happy when saying "goodbye" to Shabbat? Isn't it sad that Shabbat is over?

1. Why do you think we specifically use wine/grape juice for havdalah?
2. What makes wine different from other drinks?
3. Why do you think its important that we "sanctify the Shabbat with speech"?



# Meaning Behind the Besamim: Can You Smell It?

Gemara Beitzah 16a

דאָמער ר' שמעון בן לקיש נשמה יתרה נותן הקב"ה באדם ערב שבת ולמוצאי שבת נוטלין אותה הימנו  
שנאמר (שמות לא, יז) שבת וינפש כיון ששבת ווי אבדה נפש

**As Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish said: The Holy One, Blessed be He, gives a person an additional soul on Shabbat eve, and at the conclusion of Shabbat removes it from him, as it is stated: "He ceased from work and was refreshed [vayinafash]" (Exodus 31:17).** Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish expounds the verse as follows: **Since he ceased from work**, and now Shabbat has concluded and his additional soul is removed from him, **woe [vai]** for the additional **soul [nefesh]** that is **lost**.

Rambam Mishneh Torah Hilchot Shabbat 29:29

ולמה מברכים על הבשמים במוצאי שבת מפני שהנפש דואבת ליציאת שבת משמחין אותה ומישבין אותה ברים טוב

Why is a blessing recited over fragrant spices at the conclusion of the Sabbath? It is to cheer the soul which is saddened at the departure of the Sabbath.

1. What is your favorite smell?
2. How does it make you feel?
3. What do you use in your house for besamim?

1. What do you think it means that we have an "extra soul" on Shabbat? Do you feel any different on Shabbat? What if anything makes you feel different?
2. What does the soul have to do with smell? Why would smelling something nice make our soul less sad?
3. How do you feel when you smell something good? Are there any smells that remind you of certain things or places? How would you describe the smell of Shabbat?

1. What do you think it means that we have an "extra soul" on Shabbat? Do you feel any different on Shabbat? What if anything makes you feel different?
2. What does the soul have to do with smell? Why would smelling something nice make our soul less sad?
3. Where else in the Torah do we see a connection between the soul and our smell? Think about creation and the words used to describe God giving us a soul.

# Igniting the Flame

Hayim Donin in his article “Havdalah: The Ritual and the Concept”

“...[T]he kindling of the light as the first act of the week symbolizes the very first act of creation which took place on the first day of the week when God said ‘Let there be light’.”

Gemara Pesachim 54a

בְּמַחֲשֶׁבֶה עָלֶה לִיבְרָאוֹת בְּעֶרֶב שַׁבָּת וְלֹא נִבְרָא עַד מוֹצָאֵי שַׁבָּת דִּתְנִי ר' יוֹסִי אוֹמֵר שְׁנֵי דְבָרִים עָלוּ בְּמַחֲשֶׁבֶה לִיבְרָאוֹת בְּעֶרֶב שַׁבָּת וְלֹא נִבְרָאוּ עַד מוֹצָאֵי שַׁבָּת וּבְמוֹצָאֵי שַׁבָּת נֵתַן הַקֵּב"ה דְּעָה בְּאָדָם הָרִאשׁוֹן מַעֲיִן דְּגָמָא שֶׁל מַעֲלָה וְהִבִּיא שְׁנֵי אֲבָנִים וְטָחָן זֶה בְּזֶה וַיֵּצֵא מִהֶן אוֹר

God] thought to create [fire] before Shabbat [in the week of creation], but it was not created until after Shabbat [on Saturday night]. As Rabbi Yossi taught in a braita...after Shabbat, the Holy One, blessed be He, gave Adam wisdom akin to that of the Divine. He [Adam] brought two stones, ground them against each other, out of which came fire.

1. How can fire be a good thing?
2. When is fire not a good thing?

1. What is the significance of fire specifically?
2. Why do you think we need a candle with at least two wicks for havdalah?
3. When you light a candle with another candle, the light doesn't get smaller. What do you think that means in terms of giving? When you give to someone else, how does it make you feel?

1. Why is it important that the fire symbolizes the first act of creation?
2. What is the significance of fire specifically?
3. Why do you think we need a candle with at least two wicks for havdalah?

# What Do Fingernails Have to Do With it?



There is a custom to look at one's fingernails after the leader makes the blessing on the flame. Why?

1. Mishnah Brachot 8:6- אין מְבָרְכִין עַל הַנֵּר עַד שֶׁיֵּאֲדָתוֹ לְאוֹרֹו  
We do not bless over the flame until its light is used/benefitted from.
2. Mishnah Berurah 298:9- עוֹד שֶׁהַצַּפְרָנִים הֵן סִימָן בִּרְכָה שֶׁהֵן פְּרוּת וּרְבוּת לְעוֹלָם  
Also because the fingernails are a sign of blessing, since they always grow [literally, that they are fruitful and multiply forever].
3. Rabbi Riskin (from his article <https://jewishweek.timesofisrael.com/havdalahs-fire-and-fingernails/>)- “Human hands created fire — but human hands must use that fire to recreate and not to destroy. Therefore, we look at our fingers as we make the blessing over fire every Saturday night, the beginning of our weekly “eighth day.” We are telling ourselves that everything — the future of our lives and our world — lies in our own hands.”

1. What do we use our hands for?
2. How can you use your hands to help someone else?

1. What is one thing you are good at? How can you use that talent or gift to help others?
2. What does it mean to take responsibility for our actions?

1. What does it mean to grow spiritually?
2. What does it mean to take responsibility for our actions and that our future lies in our own hands?
3. What is one thing you are good at? How can you use that talent or gift to help others?

# The Five Senses of Havdalah



Match each of the five senses to one of the aspects of Havdalah



1. Why do you think all five senses are incorporated into Havdalah? What could be the deeper message?
2. How can we use each of our senses to serve God? Give an example for each.



# The Root of Havdalah

[Havdalah means to distinguish or separate]. When we recite this prayer, we bless God who distinguishes between sacred and profane, light and dark, Israel and the nations, Sabbath and weekday. Jewish practice calls for us to recite this havdalah on Saturday nights and at the end of holidays, not only over a cup of wine, but also during the Amidah of the evening prayer...specifically in the blessing which begins *ata chonen l'daat*, in which we pray to the Almighty for the gift of wisdom and knowledge and understanding.

...[T]he ability to discern between different values, to discriminate and to distinguish between competing claims, and therefore the ability to emerge whole from the confusions that reign in life, requires daat-- special insights and intellectual gifts... Why so?... Any child can tell the difference between light and dark... [D]aat is needed and havdalah is vital for those of us who choose to live in both realms and will reject neither-- for those of us who opt both for light and darkness, for Israel and the nations, for Sabbath and weekdays, for the sacred and the profane... who believe that the function and the mission of the Jew in the world is to illuminate the *hoshekh* (darkness); to sanctify the *hol* (profane); to bring the Jewish message to the nations; and to introduce the warmth and meaningfulness of the Sabbath to all the days of the week.

~Rabbi Norman Lamm in his article "[The Yeshiva Universe](#)"

1. What is something good you can do?
2. What is something that is not nice to do?

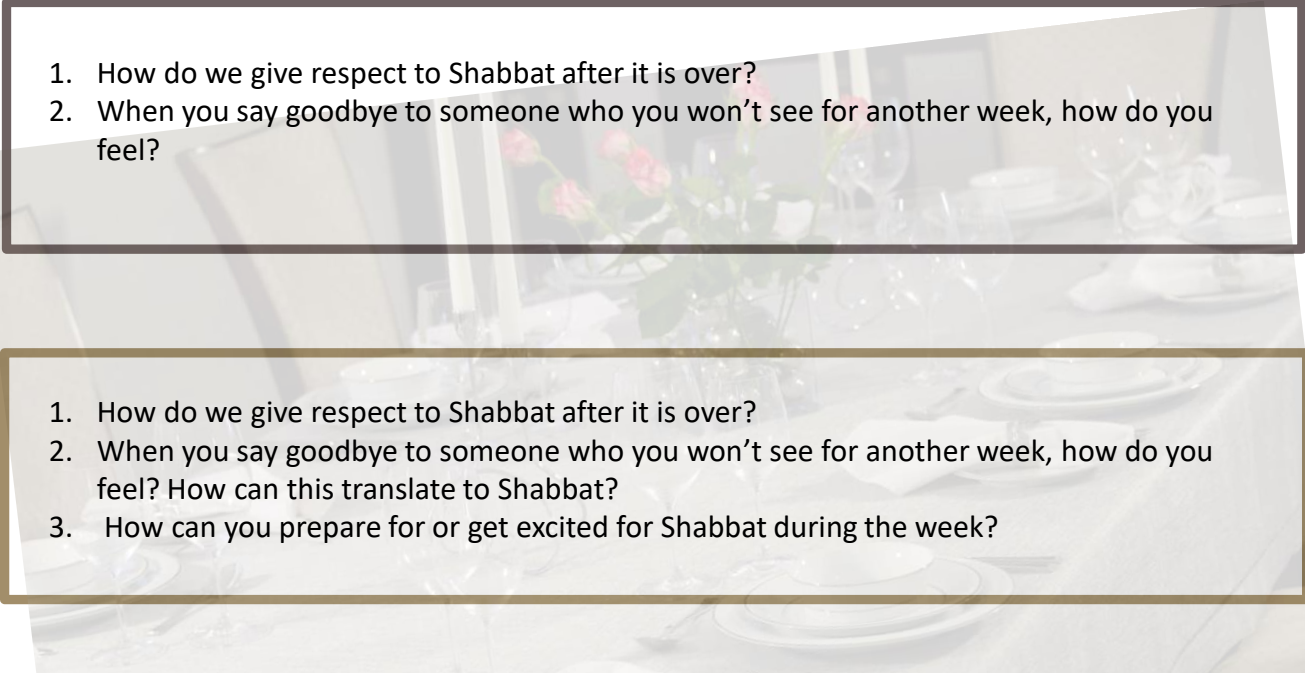
1. How can we tell the difference between what's right and what's wrong, what's good and what's bad?
2. What do you do if something isn't clearly good but also doesn't seem bad?
3. How can you use something physical, like food, and make it holy?

1. Why do we say havdalah in Shemonah Esrai in the prayer asking for wisdom and understanding?
2. How can we tell the difference between what's right and what's wrong, what's good and what's bad?
3. What do you do if something isn't clearly good but also doesn't seem bad?

# Melaveh Malkah

The Sages state that it is a mitzva to set the table on Saturday night for the *melaveh malka* (lit. “accompanying the queen”) meal, with which we honor Shabbat at its departure (*Shabbat* 119b). When one must say goodbye to a dear and beloved guest whom he does not want to leave, he escorts him a distance in order to spend just a bit more time with him. So too, we must escort Shabbat at its departure. Despite the fact that it is over, we continue to savor and delight in its holiness. On Shabbat we are blessed with additional holiness in all areas of life, material and spiritual, as expressed through prayer and meals. Our goal is to extend the light of Shabbat to the weekdays... Through *melaveh malka* we extend the light of holiness to our eating all week.

~Peninei Halacha Shabbat 7:7

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1. How do we give respect to Shabbat after it is over?
  2. When you say goodbye to someone who you won't see for another week, how do you feel?

1. How do we give respect to Shabbat after it is over?
2. When you say goodbye to someone who you won't see for another week, how do you feel? How can this translate to Shabbat?
3. How can you prepare for or get excited for Shabbat during the week?

1. How can you “extend the light of Shabbat” to your week?
2. How do we give respect to Shabbat after it is over?
3. When you say goodbye to someone who you won't see for another week, how do you feel? How can this translate to Shabbat?

# Answer Guide Part I

p.3

Wine, unlike other drinks or foods, gets better as it ages. Whereas other physical items deteriorate over time (ex: food spoils, the body weakens with age, etc.), wine improves with time. The same is true of our spirituality which, unlike most physical things, improves with time (ex: wiser, grow from our experiences, etc.). Since wine is that in-between, the one physical item that has the properties of spirituality, it represents the potential we have to elevate the physical and transform even the most mundane of things into something holy. Havdalah is more than just distinguishing between good and bad, holy and profane. It is about sanctifying the mundane and introducing holiness into everything that we do. (Based on an idea by Rabbi Akiva Tatz).

Havdalah recognizes the sadness that we may be feeling with the departure of Shabbat. Yet, we don't want to remain in that state of sadness. Therefore, structured within the havdalah service are rituals that are meant to lift our spirits. For example, the smell of the besamim is meant to uplift our souls. On the one hand, we should be sad that Shabbat is over as it is such a unique time when we can focus more on what matters- on our relationship with God and with those around us. On the other hand, rather than dwelling on that sadness, we want to focus on how we can bring that special light and feeling of Shabbat into the coming week.

By sanctifying Shabbat with our speech, both when it enters and when it leaves, we are making the experience more personal and affirming what Shabbat is about. When someone greets a friend, it is more meaningful to greet them and talk to them than wave to them but then just let them be. The same is true of Shabbat- it is not enough to acknowledge that Shabbat started. We want to welcome it in with joy and excitement and escort it out with love, which is expressed through our speech in kiddush and havdalah. Moreover, through the text of kiddush and havdalah, we remind ourselves what Shabbat is about as we mention important themes such as God's creation of the world and our relationship with Him.

p.4

There are many different ideas behind the "added soul" on Shabbat. Two understandings are that of Rashi and Rav Betzalel Ashkenazi. "Rashi ([Beitza 16](#)) focus on the heightened physical elements of one's soul on Shabbat, as he explains that the *neshama yetera* provides *rochav lev* (a heightened consciousness), *menucha* (repose), *simcha* (joy), and tranquility, including the ability to eat more and not find one's soul disgusted by it. In *Shitta Mekubbetzet*, Rav Betzalel Ashkenazi explains this differently, noting that the added soul on Shabbat is actually a spiritual addition, "a godly abundance and additional intelligence to be able to occupy oneself in Torah, and analyze the acts of God."

~Article by Rav Binyamin Zimmerman- <https://www.etzion.org.il/en/shiur-17-neshama-yetera-shabbat-and-shemitta>

An interesting connection between the soul and smell can be found in the very beginning of the Torah, in Bereshit 2:7, when God creates Adam. The Torah states, "The Lord God formed man from the dust of the earth. He blew into his nostrils the breath of life- נִשְׁמַת חַיִּים- and man became a living being." From this verse we see a connection between smell, as God "blew into his nostrils," and the neshama, the soul. Whenever we inhale and take a breath in through our nose, we are reminded of this act of creation, the great potential that we all have inside of us, and God's belief in us.



# Answer Guide Part II

p.5

Fire has potential to destroy and to create, to burn and to warm. It is fitting, therefore, that during havdalah we use a flame as it reminds us of our potential to create or to destroy, to use what we have in this world for positive or for negative.

Fire is also tied to the first act of creation- God creating light. Rabbi Riskin explains the significance of this connection:

On the seven days of creation, God created a world for humans to live in; on the eighth day Adam discovered — through fire — how he could repair and improve that world. If on the primordial seven days of Creation, God made a world for humanity, on the eighth day with the consecration of the Sanctuary, the Israelites made a Sacred Space — an improved world — In miniature, in which God could dwell with humanity: “They shall make for a Sanctuary so that I may dwell in their midst” [Exodus Trumah]. <https://jewishweek.timesofisrael.com/havdalahs-fire-and-fingernails/>

\*When referencing the consecration of the Sanctuary, Rabbi Riskin is referring to the consecration of the Mishkan, the Tabernacle, in the desert which took place on the eighth day of Nissan. Thus, the eighth day shows human involvement in creating sanctity on this earth.

p.8

So many things could be used for the good or for the bad. Every symbol in havdalah has this potentially dual nature. Wine can be used for the good or bad. It can bring joy to a person but if drunk without responsibility, it can be harmful. Spices can be used to flavor a soup for example, but if there are too many, then it will ruin the flavor of the soup. Fire can be used to destroy and burn something down or it be used to warm people up, to spread light, etc. Havdalah is a reminder for us to think about how we use everything in this world. We don't run away or try to separate from this world- but we do try to separate and distinguish how we could use what is in this world for the good. An example of elevating something physical is saying a bracha, a blessing, before eating food. By doing so, we acknowledge where our food comes from and express our thanks to God. What started as a purely physical act of eating can become a spiritual exercise that deepens our relationship with God.

“What does such holiness consist of, according to Judaism? Not in the ascetic, saintly withdrawal from life. Not in the excessive denial to oneself of all human pleasures and the repression of all human drives. It consists, rather, of full participation in the stream of human and community life, sharing the joyous as well as the sorrowful experiences which life has to offer, denying to oneself no legitimate pleasures; but at the same time so developing one's sense of discernment as to be able to distinguish the right from the wrong, the true from the false, the good from the bad, the sacred from the profane, the pure from the impure, and the clean from the unclean. The greater the sense of havdalah, of ethical-moral-religious discrimination, the greater the holiness of the individual. Holiness is the fully developed sense of havdalah in life.” ~Hayim Donin



DOR L'DOR FAMILY LEARNING PROGRAM PRESENTS

# HAVDALAH DOR L'DOR



1

## LEARNING OVER SHABBAT

Learn our enriching **Havdalah Dor L'Dor Packet** with your families over Shabbat!  
Geared for all ages!

**JAN. 8-9**



2

## GLOW IN THE DARK HAVDALAH

Join us at Young Israel for our 30 minute socially distant **Glow in the Dark** Havdalah program. Come for music, prize giveaways, and more!

**JAN. 9  
6:15 PM**

RSVP @ <https://bit.ly/RSVPHavdalah>  
To download the learning packet and for more info,  
visit [youngisraelwh.org/DorLDor](https://youngisraelwh.org/DorLDor)