

## Havdalah

### *Meditation for the New Week*

As I leave Shabbat behind,  
let me carry Shabbat  
within:  
Remind me to pause,  
to be present for myself,  
to cherish others,  
to see the beauty in Your  
creation,  
to nourish peace.  
Enable the joy of life to fill  
my being,  
the smell of spices to lift  
my spirit,  
the flame of faith to burn  
in my soul.  
Let me carry Shabbat  
within.

—ELANA ZAIMAN

### *Hineih Y'shuati— Behold My Salvation*

Perhaps this week I will  
not fear.  
Perhaps this week, I will  
hold possibility in my  
hand like a silver house  
of cloves, take the time  
to count each twinkling  
in the night sky,  
raise my fingers boldly  
up to the flame and taste  
salvation, gladness, joy.  
Then, may I bless what is  
given,  
wish it also upon others,  
pass around my overflow-  
ing cup,  
put out the fire in this  
sweetness when the time  
for letting go comes.

—TAMARA COHEN

*When reciting Havdalah at home, we begin here:*

Behold, God is my deliverer; I am trustful and unafraid.  
ADONAI is my strength, my might, my deliverance.  
Joyfully draw water from the wellsprings of deliverance.  
Deliverance is Yours; may Your blessings rest upon this  
people forever.

*ADONAI Tz'va·ot* is with us; the God of Jacob is our  
stronghold, forever.

*ADONAI Tz'va·ot*, happy is the person who trusts in You.  
Deliver us, ADONAI; our Sovereign, answer us when we call.  
The Jewish people experienced light, gladness, joy, and  
honor—so may it be with us.

*La-y'hudim hayetah orah v'simḥah v'sason vikar, ken tihyeh lanu.*

*The cup of wine is lifted:*

As I lift up the cup of deliverance, I call upon ADONAI.

*In a synagogue or at a public service, we begin here:*

*With the assent of my friends:*

*Barukh atah ADONAI*, our God, sovereign of time and space,  
who creates fruit of the vine.

*Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam, borei pri ha-gafen.*

*The following two blessings are recited only on Saturday evening.*

*At the conclusion of a Festival, we continue with the final paragraph.*

*Barukh atah ADONAI*, our God, sovereign of time and space,  
who creates fragrant spices.

*Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam, borei minei v'samim.*

*Barukh atah ADONAI*, our God, sovereign of time and space,  
who creates lights of fire.

*Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam, borei me'orei ha-eish.*

*Barukh atah ADONAI*, our God, sovereign of time and space,  
who distinguishes between the sacred and the ordinary, light  
and darkness, the people Israel and the peoples of the world,  
and between the seventh day and the six days of creation.  
*Barukh atah ADONAI*, who distinguishes between the sacred  
and the everyday.

*Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam, ha-madvil bein kodesh  
l'hol, bein or l'ḥoshekh, bein yisrael la-amim, bein yom ha-sh'vi-i l'sheishet  
y'mei hama-aseh. Barukh atah Adonai, ha-madvil bein kodesh l'hol.*

## הבדלה

**HAVDALAH** literally means  
“distinction” or “differentia-  
tion” and it is a ceremony  
that marks the ending of  
Shabbat and the begin-  
ning of the work week. It  
consists of blessings over  
wine, spices, and light, and  
a final blessing about the  
distinction between Shab-  
bat and the week. The Bible  
restricts the use of fire on  
Shabbat and so the week  
symbolically begins with  
lighting a fire. Shabbat,  
which began with the light-  
ing of candles, now is also  
brought to its conclusion  
with candelighting. But  
whereas we began Shabbat  
with individual candles,  
we end it with one candle  
whose wicks are inter-  
twined, as if Shabbat has  
created a unity that was  
lacking before. To rouse our  
senses to become awak-  
ened to the beauty we shall  
encounter during the week,  
we make a blessing over  
spices. Finally, the blessing  
over the wine sanctifies the  
week to come.

**BEHOLD, GOD IS MY DELIV-  
ERER** וְהִנֵּה אֵל יְשׁוּעָתִי. As we  
enter the week we pray for  
protection, deliverance,  
and happiness. The bibli-  
cal verses in this passage  
come from Isaiah 12:2–3  
and Psalms 3:9, 46:12, 84:13,  
and 20:10. The penultimate  
verse, remarking on joy and  
gladness, is taken from the

description in the Scroll of Esther (8:16) and expresses the joy at the deliverance from the destruction that had  
been contemplated by Israel's enemy; we add the wish that the same be true for us. The final verse, taken from  
Hallel (Psalm 116:13), leads directly into the recitation of the blessing over the cup of wine.

**BLESSING THE SPICES AND CANDLE.** It is customary for everyone to partake of these blessings, so the spices are  
passed for all to smell, and each person holds up his or her hand to the light, marvelling at the distinctions  
between skin and nails, live and dead flesh both needed.

*When reciting Havdalah at home, we begin here:*

הִנֵּה אֵל יְשׁוּעָתִי, אֲבֹטָח וְלֹא אֶפְחָד.  
כִּי עֲדֵי וְזִמְרַת יְהוָה יְהוּה, וַיְהִי לִי לִישׁוּעָה.  
וּשְׂאֲבָתָם מִים בְּשִׁשׁוֹן, מִמַּעַיְנֵי הַיְשׁוּעָה.  
לַיהוָה הַיְשׁוּעָה עַל עַמָּךְ בְּרַכְתָּךְ סֶלָה.  
יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת עִמָּנוּ, מִשְׁגֵּב לָנוּ אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב, סֶלָה.  
יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת, אֲשֶׁר־י אָדָם בְּטַח בָּךְ.  
יְהוָה הוֹשִׁיעָה, הַמְּלִךְ יַעֲנֵנוּ בְיוֹם קָרְאֵנוּ.  
לַיהוּדִים הַיְתָה אוֹרָה וְשִׂמְחָה וְשִׁשׁוֹן וִיקָר.  
כֵּן תְּהִיָּה לָנוּ.

*The cup of wine is lifted:*

בּוֹס יְשׁוּעוֹת אֲשָׁא, וּבָשֵׁם יְהוָה אֶקְרָא.

*In a synagogue or at a public service, we begin here:*

סִבְרֵי חֲבֵרִי:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְרֵי הַגֶּפֶן.

*The following two blessings are recited only on Saturday evening.*

*At the conclusion of a Festival, we continue with the final paragraph.*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
בּוֹרֵא מִיְנֵי בִשְׁמִים.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
בּוֹרֵא מְאוּרֵי הָאֵשׁ.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
הַמְבַדִּיל בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ לְחֹל, בֵּין אוֹר לְחֹשֶׁךְ,  
בֵּין יִשְׂרָאֵל לְעַמִּים,

בֵּין יוֹם הַשְּׂבִיעִי לְשִׁשֶּׁת יְמֵי הַמַּעֲשֶׂה.  
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, הַמְבַדִּיל בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ לְחֹל.

### Light

Adam was created just before Shabbat began, and during Shabbat the world was lit with the light of creation. After Shabbat darkness descended and Adam rubbed two stones together and a fire was lit. Astounded, he said a *b'rakhah*: “Blessed is the one who creates lights of fire.” On Shabbat we make Kiddush and celebrate God’s creation of the world; as Shabbat departs, we recite Havdalah and celebrate the possibility of human manufacture and creativity.

—TALMUD OF THE  
LAND OF ISRAEL

### Bring Light to the Darkness

The Hasidic master of Ruzhyn taught: This is the service a person must perform all of one’s days . . . to let the light penetrate the darkness until the darkness itself shines and there is no longer any division between the two, as it is written: “And there was evening and there was morning—one day” (Genesis 1:5).

## Songs for the Week Ahead

*Greetings are exchanged:*

May you have a good week!

A gute vokh! Shavua tov!

Elijah the prophet, Elijah the Tishbite,  
O Elijah, Elijah, Elijah from Gilead—  
come speedily, in our time,  
ushering in the Messiah, descended from David.

Eliyahu ha-navi, eliyahu ha-tishbi,  
eliyahu, eliyahu, eliyahu, ha-giladi. Bimheirah v’yameinu yavo eileinu,  
im mashiah ben david, im mashiah ben david.

Miriam, the prophetess, strength and song are in her hands,  
Miriam will dance with us, increasing the world’s song,  
Miriam will dance with us, repairing the world.  
Soon, in our days, she will bring us  
To the waters of redemption.

Miriam ha-n’viah oz v’zimrah b’yadah.  
Miriam tirkod itanu l’hagdil zimrat olam,  
Miriam tirkod itanu l’taken et ha-olam.  
Bimheirah v’yameinu hi t’vi-enu el mei ha-y’shuah, el mei ha-y’shuah.

May the one who separates the holy and the everyday,  
forgive any sins and slights.  
May our families and our fortunes  
be as many as the grains of sand, or the stars in the sky at night.

This day has disappeared, like the palm tree’s shadow.  
I call to God who has brought an end to the light  
that lit my way today. Today, the watchman announced  
the coming of the morning and now the night.

Your righteousness is like Mount Tabor,  
allowing my sins to quickly pass out of sight—  
like a yesterday that is gone or a watch in the night.

Ha-mavdil bein kodesh l’hol, hatoteinu hu yimhol,  
zareinu v’khaspeinu yarbeh khaḥol v’kha-kokhavim balailah.  
Yom panah k’tzel tomer, ekra la-El alai gomer,  
amar shomer ata voker v’gam lailah.

Ha-mavdil bein kodesh l’hol...  
Tzidkat’kha k’har tavor, al f’sha-ai avor ta-avor,  
k’yom etmol ki ya-avor va-ashmurah balailah.  
Ha-mavdil bein kodesh l’hol...

*Greetings are exchanged:*

א גוטע וואך! שבווע טוב!

אליהו הנביא, אליהו התשבי,  
אליהו, אליהו, אליהו הגלעדי.

במהרה בימינו יבוא אלינו,  
עם משיח בן דוד, עם משיח בן דוד.

מרים הנביאה עד וזמרה בידה.

מרים תרקוד אתנו להגדיל ומרת עולם.

מרים תרקוד אתנו לתקן אתהעולם.

במהרה בימינו היא תביאנו אל מעיני הישועה.

המבדיל בין קדש לחול, חטאתינו הוא ימחול,  
ורענו וכספנו ירבה כחול וככוכבים בלילה.

יום פנה בצל תמר, אקרא לאל עלי גומר  
אמר שומר, אתא בקר וגם לילה.

המבדיל בין קדש לחול . . .

צדקתך כהר תבור, על פשעי עבר תעבור,  
כיום אתמול כי יעבור ואשמורה בלילה.

המבדיל בין קדש לחול . . .

AS THE GRAINS OF SAND, OR THE STARS IN THE SKY AT NIGHT. Referencing God’s blessing of Abraham: “I will bestow My blessing on you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in heaven and the sands on the seashore” (Genesis 22:17).

THE WATCHMAN. Based on Isaiah 21:12: “The watchman said, ‘morning came and so did night....’”

MOUNT TABOR. Psalms 36:7 compares God’s righteousness to the highest mountains. Mount Tabor is the highest mountain overlooking the verdant Jezreel Valley in the Land of Israel. The image has a second meaning: as we round the mountain, it hides what is on the other side. As we turn to the week, past sins are forgiven, like a mountain hides what is on its other side.

LIKE A YESTERDAY . . . OR A WATCH IN THE NIGHT. A play on Psalm 90:4, where human life is described as fleeting. The poet turns the image on its head, remarking that God allows our sins to quickly pass by.

ELIJAH THE PROPHET. The week begins with the wish that the events of this week will be messianic. Elijah is said to be the herald who announces the coming of the Messiah.

MIRIAM too shall announce the coming of the Messiah with song and dance. The Hebrew words to this song were written by Leila Gal Berner.

MAY THE ONE WHO SEPARATES. Selected stanzas of a *piyyut* written by Isaac Judah ibn Ghiyyat (1030–1089, Spain). The full song contains an acrostic of the name Yitzhak Hakatan. A similar poem to be recited at the end of Yom Kippur is found in many Sephardic prayerbooks. This version of Hamavdil, recited at the end of Shabbat with Havdalah, is included in all Jewish rites. It makes this moment analogous to the conclusion of Yom Kippur: in leaving Shabbat, we leave behind the sins of the previous week and start a new week with freshness.

Many of the lines of the *piyyut* are based on biblical verses.