

12. *Maariv* and *Havdallah*

דִּינֵי מַעְרִיב וְהַבְדֵּלָה

1. It is customary to delay reciting *Maariv* (the nighttime prayer) at the close of Shabbat,¹ and when *Maariv* does begin, to prolong uttering its first words, “*vehu rachum*” and “*barechu*” in order to prolong the holiness of Shabbat.² In the fourth *berachah* of *Shemoneh Esreh* the prayer “*Atah*

1. **When Shabbat Ends** Shabbat ends when three small stars are visible close together in the sky. In accordance with the view held by Rabbeinu Tam, the *Shulchan Aruch* calculates this to be seventy-two minutes after sunset. While advising general acceptance of this ruling of the *Shulchan Aruch*, some *poskim* maintain that observable data in the United States would indicate a more minimal time after sunset may be followed. According to Rav Moshe Feinstein, *zt”l*, in New York, Rabbeinu Tam’s position can be recalculated to approximately fifty minutes after sunset. Similarly, Rav Y. E. Henkin, *zt”l*, estimates it at about one hour after sunset in the summer, and about three quarters of an hour after sunset in winter. Many communities follow the opinion of the Geonim, which sets the end of Shabbat about forty minutes after sunset. Everyone should follow the custom of their community. No matter what opinion you follow, it is accepted practice to delay *Maariv* beyond the prescribed time at the conclusion of Shabbat in order to add part of the weekday to the holiness of Shabbat; see also Part 1, Chapter 5, notes 2, 3.
2. ***Tehillim* Before *Maariv*** Some communities have the custom to say *Tehillim* 144 (לְדוֹד בְּרוּךְ ה’ צוּרִי) and *Tehillim* 67 (אֱלֹהִים יַחַנְנוּ) before *Maariv*, even further delaying the start of *Maariv* while also keeping people from engaging in idle talk during that time. It is, moreover, a fitting and beautiful way of accompanying Shabbat, which is

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chonantanu” is included.³ If you forgot to say it, but remembered before pronouncing *Hashem’s* name at the end of the *berachah*, you should say it then and continue with “*vechaneinu*” to the conclusion of the blessing. But if you did not become aware of the omission until after you had already pronounced *Hashem’s* name, you should conclude the *berachah* as on a weekday without returning to say “*Atah chonantanu.*” There is no need to repeat the *Shemoneh Esreh* on account of this omission because you will recite *Havdallah* over the wine after *Maariv*. However, you must not do any *melachah* and you may not eat or drink before reciting *Havdallah*. If you ate or drank, you must repeat the *Shemoneh Esreh* and include “*Atah chonantanu.*”⁴

2. After *Shemoneh Esreh*⁵ the *Chatzi Kaddish* is recited. This is followed by “*Viyhi no’am*” (*Tehillim* 90:17, *Tehillim* 91), which is said because it is the psalm with which Moshe blessed *Benei Yisrael* when

called both a Queen and Bride, as she departs, taking leave of her with songs of praise. In many congregations these chapters of *Tehillim* are sung to a traditional melody.

3. **Three Different *Havdallah* Prayers** You are required to say a *Havdallah*-type prayer, marking the end of Shabbat, both in *Shemoneh Esreh* (“*Atah chonantanu*”) and over a cup of wine (“*Hamavdil bein kodesh lechol*”). You may not perform any *melachah* before reciting a *Havdallah* prayer, or at the very least, saying the brief “*Baruch hamavdil bein kodesh lechol*” (“Blessed is He who has made a distinction between the holy and the profane”) without pronouncing *Hashem’s* name.
4. **When One Neglects to Say *Atah Chonantanu*** If you forgot to say *Atah chonantanu* in *Shemoneh Esreh*, you can compensate when you say *Havdallah* later. However, if you have no wine or beverage over which to say *Havdallah*, and you do not expect to have any even on the next day, you must repeat *Shemoneh Esreh* and include *Atah chonantanu*. In this particular case if you remembered before concluding the *berachah* of *Shome’a tefillah*, you should say *Atah chonantanu* there. Likewise, if you reminded yourself before concluding *Shemoneh Esreh*, you should return to the benediction of *Atah chonen*. Here the laws are different since there will be no *Havdallah* on wine later.
5. **Curing an Omission of the *Maariv* Prayer** If you were unable to daven *Maariv*, you can make up the omission by saying *Shemoneh Esreh* twice the following morning without *Atah chonantanu*, provided you made *Havdallah* Saturday night. But if you did not make *Havdallah*, you must say *Atah chonantanu* as you say *Shemoneh Esreh* the second time (which is in compensation for the *Amidah* you omitted the night before). Following that, you must also make *Havdallah* over a cup of wine.

they completed the work of the *Mishkan*. You should recite it while standing. It is customary to repeat the last verse, “*Orech yamim*” etc. Afterward you say “*Ve’atah kadosh*” (the remainder of the daily “*Uva letziyon*”) including the *Kedushah* until “*Yagdil Torah veya’adir*.” This is said because through the work of the *Mishkan* the *Shechinah* (Divine Presence) dwelt among *Benei Yisrael*, and therefore, it is fitting to say “*Atah kadosh, You are the Holy One, enthroned upon the praises of Israel*” (*Tehillim* 22:4).

If there is a Yom Tov during the following week, even if it occurs on Friday (*Erev Shabbat*), *Viyhi no’am* and *Ve’atah kadosh* are omitted.⁶ Since these paragraphs contain the words “You establish the work of our hands,” there must be six days in which work can be done.

After *Viyhi no’am* and *Ve’atah kadosh*, the *Kaddish Shalem* is recited, followed in some congregations by *Veyiten lecha*. The reason for prolonging the evening service at the close of Shabbat is to delay the return of the wicked to *Gehinnom*, which is delayed until the last assembly in Israel has concluded reciting *Kedushah*.⁷

3. Just as we are commanded to sanctify Shabbat over a cup of wine upon its arrival, we are similarly commanded to sanctify it over a cup of wine upon its departure by reciting *Havdallah*. *Berachot* are also said over spices and the light of a candle.⁸

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6. **Omission of *Viyhi No’am* Before Yom Tov** The omission of *Viyhi no’am* and *Ve’atah kadosh* when a Yom Tov occurs during the following week applies only to a holiday when *melachah* is forbidden according to the Torah, but not to rabbinic holidays where *melachah* is not forbidden.
7. **Prolonging the *Maariv* Service** The souls of the wicked who are given rest on Shabbat are summoned at the close of Shabbat by the angel appointed as overseer of the souls, who calls out “Return to *Gehinnom*, for *Benei Yisrael* have completed the recitation of *Kedushah*.” Therefore, *Viyhi no’am* and *Ve’atah kadosh* are to be said slowly and melodiously, thereby delaying the return of the souls to *Gehinnom*.
8. ***Havdallah* Without a Light** If you have no light, you may recite *Havdallah* over the wine and say the *berachah* over the fire later when you find one. However, this is only on *Motzaei Shabbat* since the *berachah* is in commemoration of the creation of light by Adam on the night after Shabbat; see ahead, notes 18 and 22.

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Where wine is not available,⁹ *Havdallah* can be recited over beer or coffee, or some other commonly accepted beverage (הַמֵּר מְדִינָה¹⁰) except water.¹¹

Women are obligated¹² to hear¹³ *Havdallah*.

9. ***Havdallah* During the Nine Days** During the nine days between Rosh Chodesh Av and the fast of Tisha B'Av, we do not drink wine with the exception of Shabbat. Regarding making *Havdallah* on wine, there are various opinions. According to the *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 551:10) you are allowed to make *Havdallah* over wine and then drink the wine. The *Aruch HaShulchan* cites the opinion that you should make *Havdallah* over something else other than wine (see next note). The accepted position is that of the Rema that *Havdallah* should be made over wine, but given to a child to drink. If there is no child available, or the child will not be able to drink the required amount, you should drink the wine yourself.
10. **Reciting *Havdallah* over Coffee, Tea, Milk or Soda** In the view of many *poskim*, if you have no wine, or cannot drink wine, you may make *Havdallah* over grape juice, over coffee with or without milk, over sweetened tea, or any beverage except water. Some include milk. Rav M. Feinstein *zt"l* does not permit the use of soda, because one generally drinks soda in place of water to quench thirst or to cool off, unlike other drinks which one drinks for sociability and are considered *chamar medinah*. Rav Ovadiah Yosef maintains that only intoxicating beverages, such as wine, or beer, are considered to be *chamar medinah* acceptable for *Havdallah*. When acceptable beverages are unavailable, you should listen to *Havdallah* in the synagogue or from someone else, or rely on the *Havdallah* prayer said in the *Shemoneh Esreh*.
11. ***Havdallah* is Not Recited over Water or Bread** Water is not acceptable for *Havdallah* because it is not considered *chamar medinah*. *Havdallah* cannot be recited over bread. In this regard *Kiddush*—which you may recite over the *challot*—is different, because *Kiddush* is said in the context of a meal. Therefore, bread is related to the *Kiddush*.
12. **A Woman's Obligation to Recite *Havdallah*** Some *poskim* maintain that women are obligated in the *mitzvah* of *Havdallah*, since it is included in the command to remember Shabbat which is obligatory upon both men and women equally, as is the case with all the laws relating to Shabbat. Others, however, are of the opinion that women are not obligated, because *Havdallah* is made after Shabbat and does not come under the above principle. Instead, it comes under the rule that women are exempt from *mitzvot* that are performed at a set time. They maintain, therefore, that women should not make *Havdallah* themselves, but should listen to it as it is being said by one who is obligated. In light of this doubt, the prevailing practice is that a woman should listen to *Havdallah* made by a male, but if need be she may recite *Havdallah* for herself. However, a man cannot fulfill his obligation by listening to *Havdallah* recited by a woman, since he can only fulfill an obligation through someone who has the same level of obligation as he does. Since a woman may not be obligated in *Havdallah*, a man cannot fulfill his obligation through her.
13. **Listening to *Havdallah* on the Telephone** Listening to *Havdallah* over the telephone is problematic, since you do not hear the natural, human voice when it is transmitted

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4. As soon as it is *bein hashemashot*, you may not eat, or drink anything except water, before reciting *Havdallah*. However, if you prolong *se'udah shelishit*, even into the night, you are permitted to eat and drink, since you began your meal while it was still permissible. You are also permitted to drink from the wine of *Birkat Hamazon* because that is also part of the meal, provided you are accustomed to say *Birkat Hamazon* over a cup of wine. But if you only occasionally use wine for *Birkat Hamazon*, relying on the authorities who are of the opinion that it is not needed, you are not permitted in this instance to drink the wine of the cup of *Birkat Hamazon* before *Havdallah*.¹⁴

5. You should not do any *melachah* before *Havdallah*.¹⁵ Someone who needs to put on the lights before *Havdallah*¹⁶ should first say “*Baruch*

over the telephone. Some *poskim* are of the view that your obligation is not fulfilled and you should not answer *amen* to *berachot* heard via telephone. In case of emergency, however, as when a woman is ill and in the hospital where *Havdallah* cannot be made for her, it is the opinion of Rav M. Feinstein *zt"l* that she should listen to *Havdallah* over the telephone and answer *amen*.

14. **Drinking the Wine After Sheva Berachot at the Seudah Shelishit** If the *Seudah Shelishit* celebrated in honor of a bride and groom during the week following the wedding is prolonged into the night, you are permitted to drink the wine from the *Birkat Hamazon* and the *sheva berachot*, even if you are not accustomed to say *Birkat Hamazon* over a cup of wine. It should be noted that, irrespective of Shabbat, the accepted practice is to recite *sheva berachot* only during the week after the wedding, and not to recite them even if the meal extends after dark. In this respect, Shabbat and *sheva berachot* differ. Whereas we extend *Seudah Shelishit* after dark as long as it began during the day, we do not extend the *sheva berachot*. For example, if a *chatan and kallah* were married on a Sunday, the last day of the *sheva berachot* would be Shabbat. If a *Seudah Shelishit* held in their honor extended past dark, *sheva berachot* would not be recited.
15. **Doing Melachah Before Havdallah** You are not allowed to do any *melachah*, whether *min HaTorah* or *miderabanan* before *Havdallah*, even after nightfall. Since *Havdallah* has not been made, to a degree, the sanctity of Shabbat is still present. However, if you said the *Havdallah* prayer in *Shemoneh Esreh* it is permitted, even if you did not yet make *Havdallah* over a cup of wine. If you must do a *melachah* after nightfall before reciting *Havdallah* in *Shemoneh Esreh*, you should first say *Baruch hamavdil bein kodesh lechol*, “Blessed is He who has made a distinction between the holy and the profane,” thereby signifying the departure of Shabbat.
16. **Women’s Custom to Refrain from Melachah Motzai Shabbat** Women generally refrain from *melachah* until the conclusion of *Maariv* in the synagogue. Some women have adopted the custom of refraining from *melachah* all night following Shabbat. It

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hamavdil bein kodesh lechol, bein ohr lachoshech, bein Yisrael la'amim, bein yom hashevi'i lesheshet yemei hama'aseh, baruch hamavdil bein kodesh lechol," "Blessed is He who has made a distinction between the holy and the profane, between light and darkness, between Israel and the nations, between the seventh day and the six days of work, blessed is He who has made a distinction between the holy and the profane." If Saturday night is Yom Tov, the blessing should end with "*hamavdil bein kodesh lekodesh, who has made a distinction between the holy and the holy*" (that is, between the holiness of Shabbat and the holiness of Yom Tov).

6. If you delay reciting *Maariv* on *Motzaei Shabbat*, or if you prolong *Seudah Shelishit* into the night, you are permitted to tell another Jew who has already said *Havdallah* in *Shemoneh Esreh* to do *melachah* on your behalf.¹⁷ You may benefit from the *melachah* and eat from food that was prepared, even though you will subsequently still make mention of the Shabbat ("*retzei vehachalitzenu*") in *Birkat Hamazon*.

7. The cup for *Havdallah* should be filled to the top, so that some of the wine will overflow as a token of abundance and blessing. You should hold the cup in your right hand and the spices in the left hand until after the *berachah* over the wine. Then you should take the cup in your left hand and the spices in your right hand and say the *berachah* of "*Borei minei besamim,*" following which you say "*borei meorei ha'eish*" over the light of the candle.¹⁸ Afterward you should again take the cup

is proper for everyone to refrain from regular work, other than what is necessary for the preparation of food, until after the *Melaveh Malkah seudah*.

17. **Concluding Shabbat Individually** As opposed to accepting Shabbat, an individual is not bound by the majority of the community with regard to concluding Shabbat. Even if the majority has not done so, you may recite *Maariv*, make *Havdallah*, and do *melachah* if need be, once Shabbat has come to a close.
18. **Blessing Over Besamim and Light Recited on Motzaei Shabbat** Someone who does not have wine for *Havdallah* on *Motzaei Shabbat* must nevertheless say the blessings over the *besamim* and the light. The spices are meant to be a consolation for the aching soul as Shabbat leaves us, and are intended to revive us on the departure of the *neshamah yeterah* (the additional soul that a Jew possesses on Shabbat). The light is for the fire that was first produced by Adam after the first Shabbat. Since both blessings thus relate to *Motzaei Shabbat*, they are therefore said only at that time, and not at *Havdallah* said another time, as for example when Tisha B'Av falls on Sunday, and *Havdallah* is recited Sunday night after the fast.

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in your right hand and say the blessing of “*hamavdil*.” On concluding, you should sit down and drink the entire cup, but leave some wine in the cup to be poured out and used to extinguish the *Havdallah* candle, and to dab your eyes as a token of love for the *mitzvah*.¹⁹ Custom has it that women do not drink the wine from *Havdallah*.²⁰

8. You should, if possible, mix into the spices some musk plant, as there is universal agreement that the *berachah* for musk is “*borei minei besamim*.”²¹ You should also take some of the *hadassim* used on Sukkot, for the reason that since a *mitzvah* was once performed with it (as one of the four species) it is fitting that another *mitzvah* should be observed with it.

9. As to the *Havdallah* candle, it is preferable to perform the *mitzvah* with a wax candle of several strands twined together to form

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19. **Procedure Followed When Reciting *Havdallah*** *Havdallah* is recited by Ashkenazim while standing, and by Sefardim while seated. As *Havdallah* is said, all should look at the cup of wine and the *Havdallah* candle, so as not to divert their attention. The one who made *Havdallah* should drink all of the wine, so as to be able to say the blessing “*al hagefen*” afterward. (If only the minimum requirement of a mouthful was drunk, the obligation to say “*al hagefen*” would be in doubt.) The candle is then extinguished in the wine that has been poured onto the plate to show that it was lit only for the *mitzvah* of *Havdallah*.
20. **Why Women Do Not Drink the *Havdallah* Wine** A woman does not drink the wine of *Havdallah* unless she makes *Havdallah* herself. A reason given for the custom that women do not ordinarily drink the wine of *Havdallah* relates to the Biblical account concerning the Tree of Knowledge, which *Chazal* say was a grape vine. Chava crushed the grapes and gave Adam to drink. Since wine was the cause of her sin and her separation from Adam, women do not drink the wine of *Havdallah*. (It would seem that this is only relevant when *Havdallah* is made over wine and not *chamar medinah*.)
21. **The *Berachah Borei Minei Besamim* in *Havdallah* is Said Over All Spices** The reason for the spices during *Havdallah*, as noted above (note 18), is to refresh the spirit which is distressed because of the departure of Shabbat. While there are separate *berachot* depending upon whether the fragrance comes from a tree or a plant, or whether it comes from grass or herbs (as is the case with food), in this instance the blessing *borei minei besamim* is said uniformly regardless of the spices used. This is so that people who are not well versed in the individual *berachot* will not make an invalid *berachah*, as this *berachah* is a catch-all for all species of spices. It is nevertheless best to use the kind of spices, such as cloves, whose *berachah* is actually *borei minei besamim*.

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a torch. If such a candle is not available,²² you can say the *berachah* over two candles held close together so that the flames merge to form a torch. After saying the *berachah* for the flame, it is customary to look at the fingernails and the palm of your right hand. You should fold the four fingers onto the thumb, bending them into the palm of the hand, and look at your fingernails and palm at the same time, and then stretch out the fingers and look at the fingernails from the back of the fingers.²³

10. Someone who is blind does not say the *berachah* over the *Havdallah* candle,²⁴ and someone who is unable to smell, due to a cold or any other reason, does not say the *berachah* over the *besamim*.

11. If, after saying the *berachah* over the wine, and while holding the *besamim* spices in your hand, you intended to say the *berachah* over the *besamim* but you instead said the blessing “*Borei meorei ha’eish*,” the *halachah* is as follows: If you immediately corrected yourself and said “*Borei minei besamim*,” it is considered a valid blessing and you then proceed to say the *berachah* over the light. But if you actually intended to say “*Borei meorei ha’eish*,” it is considered a valid *berachah* over the light and you should then say “*Borei minei besamim*.” What has happened in this latter case is a simple inversion of the order of *berachot* which does not invalidate them.

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22. **Reciting *Havdallah* Over Electric Lights** If candles are not available for *Havdallah*, it is permissible, according to many *poskim*, to say the *berachah* over an electric light, preferably one designated for this purpose aside from those used to light the house. The bulb should be clear and not frosted or colored, and the flame should be visible. The blessing is not said over a fluorescent light or a flashlight. Some *poskim*, however, are of the opinion that the blessing should not be said over an electric light bulb, as the glass intervenes and covers the light. Where there is no alternative, the lenient view may be adopted.
23. **Looking at the Palm and Fingernails** By looking at the palm and fingernails, you immediately benefit from the light as you distinguish between light and darkness. The fingernails are also a sign of blessing, since they are constantly undergoing a process of growth and renewal.
24. **A Blind Person Reciting *Havdallah*** While a blind person does not say the *berachah* over the light, he does recite all the rest of *Havdallah*.

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12. It is a *mitzvah* to kindle many lights on *Motzaei Shabbat* and to sing the traditional *zemirot*²⁵ to escort Shabbat with honor²⁶ upon its departure,²⁷ as a king is escorted as he departs from the city. *Eliyahu Hanavi* is remembered, and we pray that he may come and herald the Redemption. For tradition has it that Eliyahu will not come on *Erev Shabbat* in order not to prevent *Benei Yisrael* from preparing for Shabbat. On Shabbat we do not pray for his coming, as we are in doubt whether the *techum Shabbat* applies above ten *tefachim*, and he would not be able to come on Shabbat. Therefore, when Shabbat is over and he can come, we pray for him to come and bring us the good news. The Midrash also states that every *Motzaei Shabbat*, Eliyahu enters *Gan Eden* where he seats himself beneath the Tree of Life and records the merits of *Benei Yisrael* who observe Shabbat. We, therefore, remember him at this time with gratitude.

13. You should, if you can, take leave of the Shabbat with a *se'udat Melaveh Malkah*,²⁸ at which a table with bread and hot food is set in honor of Shabbat at its departure. If you are unable to eat bread, you should at least eat some pastry or fruit.

14. Even though you have already made *Havdallah*, you may recite *Havdallah* again for the sake of children who have reached the age of

25. **Traditional Zemirot Sung After Havdallah** Among the *zemirot* sung after *Havdallah* are *Hamavdil* and *Amar Hashem leYa'akov*. The best known of the *zemirot* is *Eliyahu Hanavi*, which proclaims the coming of Eliyahu and of the *Mashiach*. All of the *zemirot* as well as the *Melaveh Malkah* are ways to show our desire to take the sanctity of Shabbat with us into the workweek.

26. **Wearing Shabbat Clothes on Motzaei Shabbat** You should not remove your Shabbat clothes until after *Havdallah*. Some are accustomed to wear Shabbat clothes on *Motzaei Shabbat* until after the *Melaveh Malkah seudah*.

27. **Folding Your Tallit After Shabbat** A custom, attributed to Maharil and followed by many, is to fold the *tallit* upon conclusion of Shabbat, so as to occupy oneself with a *mitzvah* at the beginning of the new week; see Part 11, *Melachah* 38, note 30 on folding a *tallit* on Shabbat.

28. **The Melaveh Malkah Seudah** The festive meal on *Motzaei Shabbat* known as *seudah Melaveh Malkah* (lit. escorting the Sabbath Queen), is traditional, though not obligatory as are the three meals on Shabbat. It is preferably held early in the evening, and no later than midnight, so that it is close to the departure of Shabbat.

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chinuch (religious training) and all the more so for an adult, so that they may thereby fulfill their obligation. Whoever makes *Havdallah* for others should smell the *besamim* after saying the *berachah* over them, so that the *berachah* will not be *levatalah* (in vain).²⁹

15. If you forgot, or were prevented,³⁰ or even willfully neglected to make *Havdallah* on *Motzaei Shabbat*, you can recite it until the end of the third day of the week (Tuesday).³¹ However, you should not then say the *berachot* over the *besamim* or over the light. You should only say the *berachah* over the wine and “*Hamavdil bein kodesh lechol.*” After the third day of the week, you cannot recite *Havdallah*. The reason for this is that the first three days of the week are called days that follow Shabbat and considered as *Motzaei Shabbat*, while the last three days are called days preceding the coming Shabbat and therefore have no relation to the previous Shabbat.

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29. **Reciting *Havdallah* for a Woman** Some *poskim* are of the view that if a man has already made *Havdallah*, or heard it said in the synagogue, he may not recite it again for the sake of a woman unless there are male adults or children present who have not yet heard *Havdallah*; otherwise, it is preferable that she make *Havdallah* herself. Others, however, maintain that the man may recite it again for a woman exclusively. In view of the differing opinions, it is advisable that the man have in mind not to fulfill his obligation with the *Havdallah* recited in the synagogue, so that he may make *Havdallah* at home. On a woman's obligation for *Havdallah*, see note 12.
30. ***Havdallah* When Tisha B'Av is on Saturday Night** When Tisha B'Av falls on a *Motzaei Shabbat*, *Havdallah* is said during the *Shemoneh Esreh* of *Maariv*. However, *Havdallah* over the cup is not said until after the fast. The *berachah* of *Borei meorei ha'eish* is recited on Saturday night. It is said customarily in synagogue before the reading of *Eichah*. For the issue of drinking wine, see note 9.
31. **Someone Who Did Not Recite *Havdallah* on *Motzaei Shabbat*** If you fail to make *Havdallah* on *Motzaei Shabbat*, you may do so until the end of the third day, that is until sunset on Tuesday. You should nevertheless try to make *Havdallah* on the first day after Shabbat, or as soon as possible. Indeed, when it becomes possible to make *Havdallah*, you are not permitted to eat before *Havdallah*.