

HAVDALA

INTRODUCTION TO HAVDALA

Introduction to Havdala

Havdala is said after Shabbat, Jewish festivals, Rosh Hashana, and Yom Kippur. Shabbat havdala is more extensive than after Yom Kippur and Jewish festivals.

Shabbat havdala consists of:

1. **Beverage:** Wine, Grape Juice, or Chamar Medina
Wine is always the preferred beverage for all havdalas because it is prestigious.
2. **Spices**
The extra soul we are given on Shabbat leaves after Shabbat is over, so we sniff a pleasant odor to cover for that loss.
3. **Flame**
The Shabbat havdala flame commemorates that Adam HaRishon (the first man) created fire after the first Shabbat.

HAVDALA: REQUIREMENTS

To Fulfill Havdala Requirements

To fulfill the requirement for havdala, each person (not only the mevareich) should:

- Hear the blessing on wine;
- Smell the spices; and
- See the flame.

NOTE If you do not do so when hearing havdala, you should smell a spice and see a flame later and then say those blessings at that time.

HAVDALA: WHEN TO SAY

When To Say Havdala

B'di'avad, havdala after Shabbat may be said day or night until Tuesday at sunset.

NOTE From Sunday at daybreak on, use only the wine, not the candle or spices, and don't say the first paragraph (hinei El yeshu'ati...).

Waking Up for Ma'ariv and Havdala...

If you went to sleep before sunset on Saturday and planned to wake up for ma'ariv, yet slept through the night...:

- Say shacharit Sunday morning;
- Repeat the amida for tashlumin; then
- Make havdala.

NOTE If you did not intend to wake up for ma'ariv, don't say tashlumin at all.

HAVDALA: WHO SHOULD MAKE/HEAR

Who Must Hear or Make Havdala

Men and boys older than 13 years old and women and girls older than 12 years must each hear or say havdala for themselves.

Who May Make Havdala

Any Jew, male (13 years old or more) or female (12 years old or more), may say havdala for himself or herself and for anyone else.

NOTE The husband may say havdala for his wife and children even if he fulfilled his personal havdala requirement at the synagogue.

NOTE There is a difference of opinion as to whether women are required to say the blessing on fire, but the common practice is for women to say it. If a woman says havdala for a man, he must still say borei me'orei ha'eish for himself.

HAVDALA: BEVERAGE

Which Havdala Beverage

Wine or grape juice is the preferred beverage for havdala, but any common beverage (chamar medina) that is drunk for social reasons is acceptable.

NOTE Wine from birkat ha'mazon of se'uda shlishit may be used for havdala EXCEPT if the meal was a sheva brachot and as long as the wine was not drunk from at the meal.

How To Fill the Havdala Cup

For havdala, pour at least a revi'it (4 fl. oz., or 119 ml) for enough wine (or other beverage being used) to overfill the cup. This is a non-binding custom, not a halacha.

REASON Doing so is a symbol of blessing (siman bracha) that we are so rich that the wine or other drink that we spill is not important. Don't overfill your cup if you are using wine from a shmita year!

How To Hold the Havdala Cup (and Spices)

Hold the havdala wine (or other beverage) in right hand when saying the beverage blessing (then switch and hold the spices in the right hand for the spices blessing).

How Much Havdala Beverage To Drink

To be able to say the after-blessing, you must drink at least 4 fl. oz. (119 ml) from the havdala cup within 30 seconds.

If you drink only 2 fl. oz. (59 ml), you will fulfill the commandment of havdala but you will not be able to say any after-blessing.

Havdala: Who Drinks the Beverage

For men: No one should drink the havdala beverage except the person saying havdala. This is a non-binding custom, not a halacha.

For women: This custom does NOT apply to women. Women who say havdala for themselves may give their havdala beverage to someone else to drink.

NOTE During the Nine Days, the person saying havdala may drink the wine.

Havdala Beverage: Standing or Sitting

Sitting or standing while drinking wine from havdala (or kiddush) is a non-binding custom, not a halacha.

Drops of Havdala Wine above Eyes or in Pockets

Putting drops of havdala wine above your eyes or in your pockets is a non-binding custom, not a halacha.

HAVDALA: SPICES (BESAMIM)

Havdala Spices Only on Saturday Night

The only *havdala* for which we use spices and candle is Saturday night. After *Yom Kippur*, just use wine and a candle, see *Yom Kippur: Ending: Havdala*. See also [How To Hold the Havdala Cup \(and Spices\)](#).

What To Use for Havdala

You may use any nice-smelling substance for *havdala* “*besamim*,” not just spices; but the source of the scent must be natural. There is no priority for using cinnamon.

NOTE For *besamim*, you may scratch a lemon or orange or other aromatic fruit and sniff the fruit itself (but not your hand). However, say the normal *havdala* blessing, *borei minei v'samim*, instead of the normal blessing for smelling fruits (*ha'notein rei'ach tov ba'peiros*).

How Many Spices To Use for Havdala

Only one spice is needed for the spice blessing for *havdala*, even though the blessing uses the term *minei*, which is plural.

How To Hold the Spices

For how to hold the spices, see [How To Hold the Havdala Cup \(and Spices\)](#)

HAVDALA: CANDLE

Using Two Wicks To Fulfill Borei Me'orei HaEish

To fulfill the *havdala* candle blessing *borei me'orei ha'eish* (“*me'orei*” is plural and requires more than one flame), you must use a candle with at least two wicks or any two other objects with a flame.

EXAMPLES

- Two single-wick candles.
- Two matches.
- One match and one candle.

Using a Light Bulb for Havdala

A clear incandescent light bulb may be used for *havdala* if necessary and is considered to be multiple wicks.

Holding Hands Up to the Light

Holding fingers toward the *havdala* candle flame is a non-binding custom.

NOTE We hold up our hands to the light because the minimum amount of light needed to fulfill the *mitzva* of the candle is to be able to see the difference between the skin of one's hand and one's fingernail. Doing so also creates shadows of our fingers on the palm of our hands, illustrating the *bein or l'choshech* (between light and darkness) segment of the *havdala* prayer. There are also *kabbalistic* reasons.

HAVDALA: FINAL BLESSING

Havdala: Final Blessing

The normal *havdala* ending blessing is *Baruch ha'mavdil bein kodesh l'chol*. When Saturday night is a *Jewish festival*, say instead *Baruch ha'mavdil bein kodesh l'kodesh*.