

# The Ritual and the Concept of *Havdalah*

Rabbi Dr. Zvi A. Yehuda

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## The Term *Havdalah* and its Significance

The Hebrew word, *Havdalah*, means distinguishing. This concept of differentiation and distinction is universally essential. There can be no creative accomplishment, in art, science or thought, and no sense of uniqueness, whether personal or communal, without the appreciation and application of *Havdalah*. In particular, the *Havdalah* concept is central in Jewish outlook, for there can be no progressive culture, without the human power of discernment and delineation.

In the Torah, the idea of *Havdalah* appears as a leading theme in two of its major themes: Creation of the universe<sup>1</sup> and Uniqueness of the people of Israel.<sup>2</sup> These two topics encompass Torah's cosmological scope and national prominence; thus featuring *Havdalah* as a powerful tool of achievement and recognition, both celestial and social, Divine as well as human.<sup>3</sup>

Seven Divine *Havdalot* — separations, distinctions — are specified in the Torah, and enumerated in a Rabbinic *tannaitic* source:<sup>4</sup> (1) Between *kodesh* and *hol*,<sup>5</sup> namely, between the unique and the ordinary, the particular versus the regular. The popular contrasting terms, "sacred" for *kodesh* and "profane" for *hol*, are imprecise and misleading. In Judaism, as we will show, *kodesh* and *hol* are operational/behavioral categories, not supernatural/intrinsic qualities; they signify hierarchical and relative terms, not absolute or antithetical.<sup>6</sup> (2) Between light and darkness.<sup>7</sup> (3) Between Israel and the nations.<sup>8</sup> (4) Between the impure (*tameh*) and the pure

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<sup>1</sup> Gen. 1:4, 6, 7, 14, 18, in its first account.

<sup>2</sup> Lev. 10:10, 11:47, 20:24, 25, 26; in laws regarding Israel's *kedushah*, inviolable distinction.

<sup>3</sup> Ezek. 22:26, 42:20.

<sup>4</sup> *Bavli Pesahim* 104a.

<sup>5</sup> Lev. 10:10.

<sup>6</sup> Ex. 26:33: In the Jewish worship place (*mishkan/mikdash*), the פְּרֻכָּת (curtain) separated two distinguished domains, בֵּין הַקֹּדֶשׁ וּבֵין קֹדֶשׁ הַקְּדוּשִׁים, between the distinctive and the more/most distinctive; *Mishna Kelim* 1:6.

<sup>7</sup> Gen. 1:4.

<sup>8</sup> Lev. 20:26.

(*tahor*).<sup>9</sup> (5) Between the celestial and the terrestrial waters.<sup>10</sup> (6) Between Levites and Israelites.<sup>11</sup> (7) Between Kohanim (Priests) and Levites.<sup>12</sup>

In Jewish liturgy, the *Havdalah* benediction (*ha-mavdil*) which is recited at the end of the Sabbath and the festivals, articulates only three of the seven distinctions explicit in the Torah: between *kodesh* and *hol*; light and darkness; Israel and the nations. In remarkable inventiveness, however, the Sages have injected into the liturgy an additional distinction, "between the Seventh Day and the six days of work." This one Divine *Havdalah* relating to Shabbat — the very core and reason of the entire *Havdalah* ritual, and the essence of its liturgy — is, intriguingly, not explicit in the Torah.

Creation and the Sabbath are inextricably linked in the Torah. Concluding the first Creation Narrative, the Torah attests that God enriched and distinguished (*Barekh* and *kiddesh*) the Seventh Day — וַיְבָרֵךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדְּשֵׁהוּ. This idea is repeated in Torah's Sabbath normative, וַעֲלֶי-כֵן בָּרַךְ יי אֶת-יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדְּשֵׁהוּ.<sup>13</sup>

In no place does the Torah ever use the term *Havdalah* for the Sabbath. Nonetheless, the Sages do. Apparently, they perceived the Torah's terms, "*Berakha*" and "*Kedushah*" to indicate enhancement and distinction. This clearly illustrates the Rabbinic view that *Kiddush* (distinguishing the day) and *Havdalah* (separating the day) are intrinsically and pristinely synonymous and interchangeable. The people's liturgical announcement of the Divine separation (*Havdalah*) between Shabbat and weekdays — indicative of typical Rabbinic ingenuity — is implicit in the Divine dedication of the Sabbath, as well as its celebration by the people, and is vital to the whole idea of the *Havdalah* ceremony.

### Two Facets/Stages of the *Havdalah*

The *Havdalah* ritual/liturgy is conducted in two phases: By a liturgical insertion recited as part of the evening *Amidah* prayer, at the conclusion of *Shabbat* and festivals (*bi-tefillah*); and as an elaborate ceremonial composition, dramatically performed over a cup of wine (*al ha-kos*), at home and/or Synagogue, after *Tefillah*.

These two configurations of *Havdalah* date back to the days of the Great Assembly at the start of the Second Temple period (5th-4th centuries B.C.E.), who instituted [the rules and formulae of] *berakhot* (so-called, benedictions), *tefillot* (so-called prayers), *kedushot* (recital of the angelic triple *Kadosh*), and *havdalot* (recital of distinctions). The formative development of the two phases of *Havdalah*, largely shrouded in mystery, is claimed, in Rabbinic sources, to have been influenced by economic considerations. In impoverished times,

<sup>9</sup> Lev. 10:10, 11:47.

<sup>10</sup> Gen. 1:7.

<sup>11</sup> Deut. 10:8.

<sup>12</sup> 1 Ch. 23:13.

<sup>13</sup> Gen. 2:3. Ex. 20:11. The Hebrew verb *berakh* means that God 'endowed' and 'enriched' the Sabbath with Divine abundance and plenty (rather than the 'mystifying' "blessed"). The verb *kaddesh* means that God 'distinguished' and 'separated' this Day as special (the common 'pietistic' "sanctified" or the 'hollow' "hallowed" trivialize the profound original statement).

when Jews could not afford wine for both *Kiddush* and *Havdalah*, the liturgical *Havdalah* in the *Amidah* prayer prevailed; in more prosperous times, the ceremonial *Havdalah* on the cup was instituted.<sup>14</sup> Subsequently, both phases have prevailed concurrently. As the established custom now appears, *Havdalah* is first integrated within the evening *Amidah* prayer at the Sabbath's conclusion (*Moza'ei Shabbat Aravit*). Then, the dramatic ceremony over the wine is performed at home and/or in the Synagogue.

The first facet/stage of *Havdalah* consists of pure liturgy: a formula inserted within the fourth benediction of the *Amidah*, the appeal for "wisdom, insight and understanding" (*hokhmah, binah, da'at*), starting with "You grant the human being understanding" ("*Atta honen la-adam da'at...*"). Within the texture of this remarkable (and patently Jewish) appeal to God for human intellect, indicatively and demonstratively posted as the primary human need, we express our awareness of the distinction between *Shabbat* and weekdays ("*Atta honantanu...*").

Why is the *Havdalah* at the *tefillah* stage incorporated within this Wisdom benediction? Two reasons are given in the two Talmuds:

The Babylonian Talmud offers a legal-formal explanation:<sup>15</sup> Since *Atta Honen* is the first benediction in the *Amidah* which is recited on weekdays, it demonstrates the transition from the special day of Sabbath to the ordinary mundane weekdays. The moment the worshipper faces this differentiation liturgically, he signifies it with the recitation of the *Havdalah*. The first three *Amidah* benedictions (*Avot, Gevurot, Kedushat Hashem*), being adorations, are recited every day, including the Sabbath days and the festivals. The following benedictions are supplications, and thus recited only on weekdays. They are not recited on the Sabbath days or festivals, in order not to mar the joyfulness of the special days. At the close of *Shabbat*, however, we are permitted, even expected, to appeal to God for our needs (the first and foremost of which is, in Rabbinic view, wisdom). But, before doing so, and engaging in a non-*Shabbat* activity, one is required first to recite *Havdalah*.

The Jerusalem Talmud offers a more philosophical-symbolic explanation:<sup>16</sup> *Havdalah* — the cognitive exercise of distinction and discernment — is a manifestation and outcome of *da'at* — wisdom, awareness, perception, insight. For "without *da'at*, wherefrom will *Havdalah* come?!" One first appeals for *da'at* before reciting *Havdalah*. Thus, we learn that *Havdalah* — as a human spiritual and intellectual experience — is not only emulative of the ways of God, in His creation of the universe and election of Israel; it is not only a potent guard of the people's distinction. *Havdalah* is also the mark and source of human/Jewish wisdom.

The second facet/stage of the *Havdalah* entails a ceremony over wine. Customarily performed both at home and in the Synagogue, it is an elaborate, dramatic composition. As the custom later developed, it is preceded by an introductory verse from *Hallel*, "I carry 'a cup of deliverances' (*kos yeshuot*), as I call on the name of Hashem!"<sup>17</sup> In context, the "cup of deliverances" appears as a metaphoric reference to the constant flow of

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<sup>14</sup> Bavli Berakhot 33a.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Yerushalmi Berakhot 5:2; cf., Rav Yosef, Bavli Berakhot 33a.

<sup>17</sup> Psalms 116:13. *Hallel* is a liturgical unit comprised of Psalms 113-118. Psalms 145-150 comprise a daily

God's benefits; it is the "vessel" of God's daily providential provisions which the worshipper figuratively "carries" with him as he turns to, and calls on, God in gratitude. He "carries" this figurative "cup" existentially, through his life experiences: spiritually, within himself, and ritually, when he is holding a cup of wine, symbolic of the Divine "cup of deliverances." As prelude to the *Havdalah*, the "cup of deliverances" is most concretely the tangible cup of wine held by the worshipper while performing the ritual and reciting the benedictions. The verse thus serves a dual purpose; it both introduces and explains the opening part of the ritual — **Wine**.

Augmenting the "cup of deliverances" verse, the *Havdalah*, as developed later in Ashkenazic communities, starts with a more elaborate selection of auspicious, uplifting verses, starting with a liturgical verse from Isaiah, "Behold the God of my deliverance! I am confident and fearless!" (*Hinne El yeshuati*).<sup>18</sup> In a subtly argumentative and remonstrative gesture, this verse echoes the "cup of deliverances" verse: The "*El Yeshuati*" ("God of my deliverance;" or, "my God of deliverance") stands in a contrast of clarification and qualification to the "*kos yeshuot*" ("cup of deliverances"): Deliverance is thereby attributed to God alone, not to any vessel or intermediate.

Following this charmingly edifying bouquet of Biblical verses, the *Havdalah* consists of four benedictions. However, only the last/fourth one is the *Havdalah* proper (*ha-mavdil*). The order of the four: Wine (*Yayin*), Spices (*Besamim*), Light/Fire (*Ner/esh*), and *Havdalah*. It has been noted that, as a mnemonic sign, their Hebrew acronym, YVNH, comprises the name *Yavneh* (the post-destruction Torah center in Israel).<sup>19</sup>

The first two benedictions are, in essence, "ordinary" *birkhot ha-nehenin* ("enjoyment/pleasure benedictions"), recited regularly before any enjoyable consumption of edible substances — whether in worship or not — thanking God for providing the natural sources for human cultivation and gratification. Whenever a Jew is about to drink wine or smell spices, he is expected first to recite the appropriate *berakha*, in gratitude to God, as the source of all worldly benefits and provisions. Thus, there is nothing particularly "*havdalic*" — or related to the departure of the Sabbath — in the formulae and recitation of these first two *Havdalah berakhot*, over wine (*Yayin*) and spices (*Besamim*). What we want to know, however, is why do we include the consumption of wine and spices and, hence, their corollary *berakhot*, within the drama of *Havdalah*?

Wine is treated in Jewish ritual as both source and symbol of human joy; it dignifies and solemnizes the occasion. The Psalms verse from *Hallel*, added at the start of the *Havdalah*, "I will lift up the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of *Hashem*" aims to elucidate this point.<sup>20</sup> The carrying of the cup by the worshipper concurs with, and embellishes, his devotional calling on the name of God. It illustrates that the cup serves to

preparatory adoration unit, recited at the start of the morning *Tefillah* known as *Hallel* of *Pesukei Dezimra*. Psalm 136 is sometimes referred to as "The Great Hallel".

<sup>18</sup> Isaiah 12:2-3; Psalms 3:9, 46:12, 84:123; 20:10; Esther 8:16 (this last verse is repeated by the audience).

<sup>19</sup> R. Avraham ben Natan of Lunel (12th Century), *Ha-manhig*, *Shabbat* #76. Perhaps it also means *yivneh*, may He [God] rebuild [Jerusalem]! After the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, Rabban Yohanan Ben Zakai moved the Sanhedrin to Yavneh. It left Yavneh for Usha in 80 CE and returned in 116 CE.

<sup>20</sup> Psalms 116:13.

enhance the ritual, not the ritual to "bless" (or "consecrate") the cup. This theological clarification is critical; it comes to disclaim and dispel any pagan notions of the metaphysical or "sacramental" role that might be alleged on the cup of wine in Jewish worship. The wine represents human joy, not Divine attributes. It also ties in the *Havdalah* ritual with the *Kiddush*, both performed over wine, thus closing the circle of the Sabbath experience.

The incorporation of spices within the *Havdalah* ceremony is mentioned in passing in the *Mishna* as an old established fact.<sup>21</sup> Enigmatically, however, this puzzling custom — unique and without a parallel in common Jewish ritual — is given no explanation or rationale in early Rabbinic sources. In later sources (from the 12th century on) a remarkable psychological insight is introduced as the reason for the inclusion of spices within the *Havdalah*, phrased in two variants:

The *Tosafot* school (Talmudic commentators in France and Germany) present the idea in mystical-metaphysical terms: The spices serve as a restorative remedy for the loss of the "additional soul" (*neshama yeterah*) which the Jew, according to Rabbinic lore, experiences during *Shabbat*, as he indulges in the day's physical delights.<sup>22</sup> Maimonides presents a similar idea in his typical, rational style: "Since the mind is saddened at the departure of *Shabbat*, we cheer and gladden it with fragrant spices."<sup>23</sup> As the Jew is about to forego his "Sabbatical" extra-vitality, facing the sorrow of the day's departure, he lifts up his spirit with the fragrances of pleasant spices.

The association between the *Havdalah* spices and the "*neshama yeterah*" concept, originated among Ashkenazic sages, and has its roots in the rabbinic evaluation of spices as sustaining the spirit (*neshama*) rather than the body (*guf*).<sup>24</sup> Focusing on the final verse of Psalms (150:6), "Let all the '*Neshama*' (all that breathes) praise *Hashem*," the Rabbis deliberate, "What is that which the '*neshama*' enjoys, but the '*guf*' does not? It is the aroma of spices!" The common interpretation of "*neshama*" as soul and "*guf*" as body, particularly in this context, is poignantly wrong and misleading. The term *neshama* in the Psalms verse is clearly understood by the Sages to refer to breathing (inhalation, from *neshimah*); *guf*, in contrast, refers to the physiological, digestive system: The fragrance of spices is imbibed by inhalation, by *neshama*, and is not consumed by the stomach (*guf*) as food or drink.

The common allegation that the joy of smelling is more spiritual than the joy of eating or drinking is in reality probably incorrect; it is merely poetic. The Talmudic sages, in astonishing advance of the science of their times, were keenly aware of the psychosomatic phenomenon, Nahmanides insightfully remarks that the smelling of spices is, nonetheless, akin to eating and drinking, in that it physically penetrates and sustains the body; hence, it no less requires a benediction for physical enjoyment.<sup>25</sup> It is noteworthy that, among Sephardic communities,

<sup>21</sup> *Mishna Berakhot* 8:5.

<sup>22</sup> *Rashbam, Bavli Pesachim* 102b; *Rashi, Bavli Bezaḥ* 33b; *Tosafot*, ad loc. Are spiritual delights included? The daily incest *ketoret* rite was part of the Temple order, and was not emulated in the Synagogue ritual.

<sup>23</sup> *Sefer Zemanim, Hil. Shabbat* 29:24.

<sup>24</sup> *Bavli Berakhot* 43b.

<sup>25</sup> R. Moshe ben Nahman (13th c. Spain) in his *Novellae*, ad loc. [R. Moses ben Nahman Girondi, known by his acronym Ramban; 1194–1270]

the smelling of spices is quite customary during the Sabbath (presumably in order to complete the desirable number of "a hundred *berakhot* a day"). As we bid farewell to the precious day of Shabbat, we still endeavor to cling to its exhilarating aroma, symbolized by the *Besamim* of the *Havdalah*.

### The *Berakha* over light/fire (*ner/esh*)

This part of the ceremony is most puzzling and intriguing. It is the only *Berakha* that is uniquely "*havdalic*" that is recited before the final *Havdalah* proper. It involves an elaborate and bizarre ceremony and script recited and performed only at the conclusion of the Sabbath. God is depicted as "Creator of the lights of the fire" (*Borei me'orei ha-esh*). Why? It is recited over a manifold, torch-like, flame derived from a plaited, multi-wicked candle — representing a fusion of light and fire — symbol of human enlightenment and enterprise. This *Berakha* is recited only within the context of the *Havdalah* ritual, and is clearly related to the overall experience of the conclusion of *Shabbat*. Fire is a powerful tool for human productivity, industry and labor. Fire may not be kindled on *Shabbat*.<sup>26</sup> Now, as Shabbat ends, we enter the world of human creativity and enterprise, fulfilling our role as God's partners in cultivating the universe. This is symbolized by the *Havdalah* fire.

In Greek mythology, Prometheus had to steal the fire from the begrudging, malevolent gods, and he was severely punished for his audacity. In contrast, Jewish tradition views fire — and the ability of human beings to create, control and utilize it — as a Divine gift. This idea is illustrated in a fascinating Talmudic legend: At the end of the first Shabbat, God granted wisdom to the first Adam, enabling him to invent and produce fire; thereupon he recited the benediction on "the lights of fire" in thanksgiving for this Divine gift.<sup>27</sup> Here, too, we see the connection between the two themes, Wisdom (*da'at*) and *Havdalah*. Fire, the focal symbol of the *Havdalah*, is the result of wisdom, God's gift to humanity.

Also, the *Havdalah* lights at the close of Shabbat parallel the kindled lights at its beginning — with a striking contrast: The flaming fire of the *Havdalah* candle-stick (of intermingled wicks [*avukot*]) varies from the placid glow of the Shabbat candles (each of a single wick [*ner*]). The blazing lights of fire at the departure of *Shabbat* presage a week of industry and creativity; the tranquil lights which welcome Shabbat herald the anticipated day of rest, to be conducted in domestic peace.

The final *Havdalah berakha* (*ha-mavdil*) is liturgically the *Havdalah* proper. It mentions four distinctions: *kodesh* versus *hol* (the extraordinary versus the ordinary; the current folksy "the holy versus the profane" is simply incorrect); light versus darkness; Israel versus other nations; the Seventh day versus the six days of work. The *berakha*'s conclusion (its "signature") reiterates the first distinction of *kodesh/hol*, pointing to the uniqueness of the Sabbath.

This final distinction is quintessential, encompassing all others. Rabbi Yehuda Ha-Nasi (*Mishnah* redactor), in his *Havdalah*, recited only this distinction.<sup>28</sup> The climactic point of the *Havdalah* as well as its conceptual

<sup>26</sup> Ex. 35:3.

<sup>27</sup> Bavli Pesachim 53b; Yerushalmi Berakhot 8:5.

<sup>28</sup> B. Pesachim 103b, Rashbam.

kernel is, thus, the appreciation and enhancement of *kedushah*.

In the Hebrew mind, *kedushah* (distinction) is related to *havdalah* (separation and apartness). Because of the tremendous impact of the Western way of thinking and articulation, which recognizes no relation between the notion of distinctiveness and the act of division, we tend, however, to ignore the inherent interconnectedness between *havdalah* and *kedushah*, and the parallel correlation between *Havdalah* and *Kiddush*. Properly viewed, the two rituals are two sides of one coin: the signification of *Shabbat*.

### The Correlation between *Havdalah* and *Kiddush*

Conceptually, both rituals, *Kiddush* and *Havdalah*, are based on one precept, stemming from a single Torah verse:<sup>29</sup> "*Zakhor* — Remember the day of Shabbat, *le-kaddesho* — to actuate/experience its *kedushah*!" The verse, as a whole, calls us to recognize, appreciate, cherish, realize, enhance and express the *kedushah*, the distinctiveness and uniqueness of *Shabbat*. The key words are *zakhor* and *le-kaddesho*, remembrance and distinction, which, in essence, are interrelated. We remember (*zakhor*) that which is prominent, esteemed and distinguished (*Kadosh*).

The verb "*zakhor*" (to remember) in the Exodus version of the Decalogue has been compared in Rabbinic literature to "*shamor*" (to observe) in the Deuteronomic version; both, however, may be taken as synonymous, *zakhor* urging us "to be mindful," and *shamor* "to keep in mind" (compare *shamar* in Gen. 37:11).

As understood in Rabbinic tradition, however, *zakhor* assumes a special connotation. It implies actualized remembrance, assertive mindfulness, encompassing both mental awareness and oral pronouncement — reinforcing emotional involvement with active participation. How do we "remember" the Sabbath Day? "With words," say the Sages<sup>30</sup> — by verbal announcement of the day's uniqueness. Semantically, the verb '*zakhor*' also means to mention, to point out, to declare. Thus, Maimonides projects both rituals, *Kiddush* and *Havdalah*, as two aspects of one *mitzvah*, in his *Sefer Ha-Mizvot*:<sup>31</sup>

This *mitzvah* is: To recite words, at the entrance (*kenisah*) and the exit (*yeziah*) of the Sabbath, mentioning the extraordinary significance and prominence of the day and its distinction from the ordinary weekdays which precede and follow it. The Scriptural source is the verse, "*Zakhor ... lekaddesho*" (Ex. 20:8), meaning: commemorate the Sabbath day by proclaiming its lofty uniqueness; as explained in the *Mekhilta*, "Express (mention; "*zakhor*") the Day's uniqueness ("*le-kaddesho*") by [reciting] a *berakha*;" and, as the Sages specify, "over wine."

They further elaborate (*Bavli Pesachim* 106a) on the verb "*le-kaddesho*" ("to proclaim its *kedushah*;" to declare its uniqueness): "*Kaddeshehu bi-khenisato*" — announce the day's *kedushah* on its arrival (on Friday night); referring to *Kiddush* — and "*Kaddeshehu bi-yeziato*" — do the same on its departure (on

<sup>29</sup> Ex. 20:8.

<sup>30</sup> 30. *Mekhilta*, ad loc.

<sup>31</sup> *Sefer Ha-Mizvot*, *mizvat assh* 155.

Saturday night); referring to *Havdalah*, which is part of our duty to recall the Sabbath's *Kedushah*.

In the same vein, Maimonides introduces the *Havdalah* ritual in conjunction with the *Kiddush* concept in his Code.<sup>32</sup>

It is an obligatory precept to express the uniqueness of Shabbat in words; as it says "*Zakhor* [remember] the day of *Shabbat*, *le-kaddesho* [to express its *kedushah*]" (Ex. 20:8); you shall memorialize [the day] by observing it as a day of rest (*Shabbat*) and announcing its distinctiveness (*Kiddush*).<sup>33</sup> One ought to remember the day on its arrival and on its departure. On its arrival, by *Kiddush Hayyom*; on its departure, by *Havdalah*.

The commemoration of Shabbat [*zekhirat Shabbat*, from *zakhor*] entails, according to Maimonides, a dual obligation: in deeds (actually), to observe it as a day of rest, and by mouth (orally) to pronounce its distinctiveness. By both resting (verb, *shabbat*) and reciting the *Kiddush*, we experience and proclaim the prominence of the day — its *kedushah*. As we clearly see from Maimonides' style, *Kiddush* and *Havdalah* parallel and complement each other. Both, in conjunction, create a dramatically impressive demarcation of the precious day, from start to end.

By recognizing the significance of the day, in the *Kiddush* ceremony, we set the borders which "separate" the preceding ordinary weekdays and the arrival of the special day; by the "separation" of the *Havdalah* ceremony we express the intrinsic "significances" of the departing day, as distinguished from the forthcoming days of labor which assume their own significance. The weekdays are called *hol*, namely ordinary (relative to *Shabbat* which is *kodesh*, extraordinary); they are certainly neither ungodly nor profane.

A Jew strives, as he must, to live a religiously dignified and significant life (of *kedushah*) each and every day of the year, whether it is *Shabbat*, *Yom Kippur*, or a regular mundane weekday; for him no day is insignificant or profane. As we are ordained to rest on *Shabbat*, so are we expected to labor during the rest of the week; "Six days you shall work and do all your tasks, and the Seventh day is *Shabbat*...!" Both engaging during the weekdays in *melakha* (constructive creativity; cultivating and preserving the environment) — as *malakh* (agent

<sup>32</sup> Sefer Zemanim, Hit. Shabbat 29:1.

<sup>33</sup> My rendition of Maimonides, "you shall memorialize [the day] by observing it as a day of rest (*Shabbat*) and announcing its distinctiveness (*Kiddush*)" deviates significantly from the common translations. The rendition in the Yale Judaica Series edition (New Haven, 1961), "Remember it by way of recital of praise and sanctification," is based on the printed editions of Maimonides' Code, which mistakenly read שבה *shevah* (praise) instead of שבת *Shabbat* (the letter tav ת is frequently copied as het ה), thus regrettably introducing an extrinsic element to the precept of *Kiddush* (praise), which is certainly not indicated in the quoted verse. The correct version, based on earlier manuscripts, has been recently published in the Kafah edition, Jerusalem, 1986. This phrase (reading *Shabbat* instead of *shevah*) certainly makes sense, as it follows and interprets the previously quoted verse, which includes three crucial words, *zakhor*, *shabbat* (not *shevah*) and *le-kaddesho*: "*zokhrehu zekhirat Shabbat ve-Kiddush*" (Maimonides' words): "*zekhirat Shabbat*" entails its commemoration as *Shabbat*, a day of rest, from "*zakhor et Yom Ha-Shabbat*" and "*ve-kiddush*" adds the rite of its verbal recital, from "*le-kaddesho*."

and, metaphorically/rabbinically speaking, ‘partner’) of God — and resting on the Sabbath, ought to be elevated to the level of *kedushah* — significance and purposefulness.

The distinction between *kodesh* and *hol* — the core theme of *Havdalah* — reflects our recognition and appreciation of particulars, in their singularity and significance — the Seventh day, light, and Israel. As such, this distinction does not admit a polarization between any select particular and its respective counterparts — the six days of work, darkness, or the nations. *Havdalah* points to uniqueness, and implies no antagonistic, conflicting extremes. Weekdays, too, are divinely significant, though differently from *Shabbat*; festivals, although less so than *Shabbat*, are still *kodesh*. When the conclusion of *Shabbat* coincides with the start of a festival, the formula, recited at the *Havdalah/Kiddush* of the occasion, specifies a distinction "between *kodesh* and *kodesh*" — for the *kedushah* (so-called "sanctity") of *Shabbat* is more pronounced than that of the festival.<sup>34</sup>

The categories of *hol* and *kodesh* being relative, the middle days of a festival are called "*hol-hamo'ed*" (they are certainly not the "profane days of the festival"); these festive days, though *hol* (work on them being less restricted than on festival days), are still special, and distinguished from regular weekdays.

We celebrate the Seventh day, which is a day of *kodesh*, as we abstain from work; we elevate the six days of *hol*, infusing them with **kodesh**, as we engage in work. As we depart from the sanctity of the Seventh day, we look forward towards the six days of work, "which approach us for our good" (*le-tovah*), and to our sacred duties and responsibilities during these weekdays. As *Shabbat* arrives, we welcome her with special joy, as we recite the **Kiddush**. As *Shabbat* leaves, we wish her farewell, as we somberly recite the *Havdalah*. Then we look forward for the advent of a new week.

To mark the preciousness of *Shabbat*, we add to its holiness by welcoming it earlier, before sunset, and parting from it later, after nightfall. As we part, we sing with hope and yearning the traditional hymns, *Eliyahu Ha-Navi* and *Shavu'a Tov* — praying for our people's redemption and wishing one another a "good" week. The weekdays, though *hol* (relative to the Sabbath and festivals) — are still projected and expected to be significant, meaningful — namely, "good." As any sacred festival in Judaism is considered to be a *Yom Tov* — a "Good Day" — so we wish the mundane week following *Shabbat* to be similarly a *Shavu'ah Tov* — a "Good Week" and the routine year following Rosh Hashanah, to be a "*Shanna Tovah*" — a "Good Year" — in light of the Torah's first creation narrative, that on the conclusion of the Sixth day of work, even before the advent of the Seventh, God declared all His creation to be "*Tov Me'od*" — "Very Good!"

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<sup>34</sup>

. Ex. 20:9, 34:21. 35. *Mishna Hulin* 1:7.