The Habdala Ceremony

Previously, we saw the different opinions regarding the time Shabbat ends (see **here**). We also began to explain the Habdala ceremony, which is the official way we depart from Shabbat, and the fulfillment of a biblical commandment (see **this**).

Before we do the Habdala ceremony we pray Tefilat ‘arbit, as we do every night, including a special text: *“Ata honantanu”,* which means”You, haShem, granted us wisdom and understanding… enabling us to distinguish between light and darkness, between the holy and mundane and between the Seventh day and the rest of the week…. “. By reciting this text we acknowledge the distinction between Shabbat, ending as we speak, and the rest of the week, that is beginning right now. In ancient times, when the Jewish people were such a difficult financial situation that they were not able to afford wine for the hadbala, the Rabbis (*anshe keneset hagedola*) did not require to perform the Habdala ceremony, but just the recitation of *Ata honantanu*.

Because we love Shabbat and we have a particular instruction to add some time from the weekdays (Friday and Sunday) to Shabbat we do not rush to pray ‘arbit. On the contrary, we actually recite some Psalms from Tehilim (leDavid… laMnatzeah) and the Hazan sings the qaddish and other prayers with a slow melodie, to delay the end of Shabbat.

After the ‘arbit prayer, the custom is that the Hazan recites the Habdala for all the congregants in the Synagogue. Particularly for those who for any reason will not recite the Habdala at home.

Therefore, all those who listen to this Habdala with the intention of being included in it, fulfill the Mitzva of Habdala (even if they did not drink from the wine).

Now, those who already participated in this public Habdala, can still do Habdala at home for their family members.

The correct custom, following the *shulhan ‘arukh*, is to say or listen to the Habdala while seated.

Shabbat Shalom!

Candle lighting in NYC: **7.05** pm

Shabbat ends in NYC: **8.06** pm

For Minhaguim of Sefirat ha’Omer see **THIS**

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