



Havdalah Candle

Havdalah recited after *Shabbat* ends consists of four *berachot*. The *beracha* on wine, *besamim* (spices), flame and the *beracha* of *havdalah*. This week we saw the debate regarding the order of these *berchaot* (8:5) and the discussion about what can be used for the *besamim* and the flame (8:6). The *Mishnah* closes by teaching that one cannot recite the *beracha* of *bore me'orei ha'esh* until he has benefitted from the fire. We shall try to understand this law.

The *Bartenura* explains one does not need to benefit from the flame prior to reciting the *beracha*. It is sufficient that he is close enough to the flame, that he could derive benefit if he needed to.¹ Citing the *Gemara*, the *Tifferet Yisrael* explains that he must close enough such that he can discern a coin's denomination by its light.

The understanding of the *Mishnah* thus far assumes a reading of the *Mishnah* that uses the term יארתו, spelled with an *aleph*. The *Tifferet Yisrael* however explains that the exact term is debated in the *Yerushalmi*, with *Rav* maintaining our version of the *Mishnah*. The *Tifferet Yisrael* explains that term implies proximity. *Shmuel* however understands it should be read יערתו, the root of which is עת which means time. In other words, the *Mishnah* is understood to be instructing one to only make the *beracha* at the time when the candle is most useful – when it is sufficiently dark. In other words, according to the *Yerushalmi*, the *Mishnah* was concerned with either proximity or optimal timing and not deriving benefit alone.

Perhaps we can understand these requirements by analysing another law related to *Havdalah* candles. There is a debate regard whether one can recite *bore me'orei ha'esh* on a *Havdalah* candle that is inside a glass lantern. The *Gemara* seems to suggest that one cannot. The *Gemara* (53b) teaches that if the flame is insides a lantern, one cannot make the

beracha unless he sees the flame. *Rashi* understands that the *Gemara* is referring to a glass lantern, and even though one can see the flame through the glass, the *beracha* cannot be recited. Note that this would be the case even he is close enough to derive benefit from its light.

The *Raavad* however disagrees. If the lantern was glass such that the flame was visible there would be no issue with reciting the *beracha*. Glass is not considered a sufficient separation regarding laws impacted by visibility. For example, one cannot recite *berachot* in front of someone who is uncovered, even if separated by glass. Consequently, the *Mishnah* may be referring to a solid lantern, that emits light while the flame is concealed.

The *Mishnah Berurah* (*Bi'ur Halacha* 298, s.v. *oh*) however defends *Rashi* against the *Raavad's* proof, arguing that the two cases are different. We need to appreciate why we recite the *beracha* of *borei me'orei ha'esh* on *motzei Shabbat*. The *Gemara* (*Pesach* 54b) explains that it was on *motzei Shabbat* that *Hashem* gave *Adam* the inspiration to strike two stones together to start a fire. It was the beginning of the “creation” of fire. The *beracha* we recite is in recognition of that event.

To be clear the *beracha* is not because one is deriving benefit from fire. Instead, it is a *beracha* of praise connected to its genesis.² This then explains why one does not need to derive benefit from the fire. More important is the proximity and timing so that when one makes the *beracha*, it is similar to that first moment. The *Mishnah Berurah* understands that *Rashi* takes this concept one step further. In that first moment the fire was exposed and not enclosed by glass. Consequently, despite the fact that one might be able to see the flame through glass, the situation does not accurately represent that first moment for the *beracha* to be recited, so the *borei me'orei ha'eish* cannot be said.

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¹ Note that there are opinions that one must derive benefit from the light (*Baal HaMeor*). Interestingly, *Haghot Maimoniot* cites the *Midrash Shachar Tov* who explains that the *minhag* to look at one's fingernails by the light of the candle, is based on the *pasuk* in *tehillim*, “all my bones shall say, ‘Hashem who is like you?...’”. In other words, one's entire body, even to their fingertips, sing *Hashem's* praises.

² Accordingly, the *beracha* would be more like the *beracha* recited when one sees a place where a miracle occurred (9:1).

Revision Questions

ברכות ח': א' – ט': ה'

- Explain the debate between *Beit Shammai* and *Beit Hillel* regarding:
 - *Kiddush* on *leil Shabbat* (ח': א')
 - Washing hands and drinking wine (ח': ב')
 - The placement of a hand-towel (ח': ג')
 - Washing hands and sweeping up (ח': ד')
- Explain the debate between *Beit Shammai* (*B"Sh*) and *Beit Hillel* (*B"H*) regarding *havdalah*. (ח': ה')
- What three things are forbidden to use as *besamim* or *ner* for *havdalah*? (ח': ו')
- Explain the debate between *B"Sh* and *B"H* regarding one who has forgotten to say *birkat ha'mazon* and finds themselves in a different location from where they ate. (ח': ז')
- What is the maximum time that someone can wait before *benching*? (ח': ח')
- Explain the debate between *B"Sh* and *B"H* regarding drinking wine and *benching*. (ח': ט')
- Can someone answer *amen* to a *bracha* if they only heard the end of the *bracha*? Is there a difference who said the *bracha*? (ח': י')
- List all the debates between *B"Sh* and *B"H* listed in the eighth *perek*.
- What *bracha* does one make on:
 - Seeing a place where miracle occurred for the benefit of *Israel*? (ט': א')
 - Seeing a place (in *Israel*) where idol worship was removed? (ט': א')
 - Comets, earthquake, lightning, thunder and storms? (ט': ב')
 - Mountains, hills, seas, rivers and deserts? Explain the debate regarding the "great ocean". (ט': ב')
 - Rain and good news? (ט': ב')
 - Bad news? (ט': ב')
 - Building a new house and buying new utensils? (ט': ג')
- Give some examples of a *t'fillat shav*. (ט': ג')
- Explain the debate about the number of *brachot* one recites when entering and exiting a walled city. (ט': ד')
- What (four things) does the *mishnah* learn from the following *pasuk*: (ט': ה')
 "וַאֲהַבַת אֶת ה' אִי בְכַל לִבְבְךָ וּבִל נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל מְאוֹדְךָ"
- What (seven things) should one refrain from doing in the *Beit ha'Mikdash*? (ט': ה')

What extra phrase was added to *brachot* in the *Beit ha'Mikdash*?

פאה א': א'

- Which *mitzvot* have no fixed measure? (א': א')

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| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | שבת קודש |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 23 January כ"א שבט | 24 January כ"ב שבט | 25 January כ"ג שבט | 26 January כ"ד שבט | 27 January כ"ה שבט | 28 January כ"ו שבט | 29 January כ"ז שבט |
| Peah 1:2-3 | Peah 1:4-5 | Peah 1:6-2:1 | Peah 2:2-3 | Peah 2:4-5 | Peah 2:6-7 | Peah 2:8-3:1 |

