

HAVDALAH—SEPARATION

Havdalah is the ceremony of separation. Celebrated at the end of Shabbat and the start of the new week, it reminds us of the pieces of sacred time we want to bring with us into the rest of our lives. Some of you may have begun this Shabbat by lighting candles on Friday night. For many of us, this is our opportunity to come together to celebrate our Jewish heritage in loving community. In the words of Rabbi Jonathan Sacks:

“Religious ritual is a way of structuring time so that we, not employers, the market or the media, are in control. Life needs its pauses, its chapter breaks, if the soul is to have space to breathe.”

As we sing the melody of this ceremony, allow yourself to take that pause. Find that space to breathe. Drink the wine, smell the spices, see the flickering light of the candle. Let it soften the tightened places inside of you and let yourself feel more fully human and present to this moment together.

A Michaye

I remember after long afternoons playing with his grandchildren, my grandfather would sit in his armchair and sigh, a *michaye*. The Yiddish word comes from the same Hebrew root for *l'chayim*! It is that feeling of the life returning to our tired limbs, or the deep breath with a sigh of relief after a period of uncertainty. Sometimes it is just the relaxing of taking time from the busyness and the business of life to just be in the moment. Let us be enlivened this evening, through taking this pause together. And let us feel the *michaye* together.

THE FRUIT OF THE VINE

The sweetness of wine has always been one of our precious symbols of celebration. Let the taste enliven you.

מחיה מפרי הגפן
michaye m'pri hagafen
enlivened from the fruit of the vine

THE VARIETY OF SPICES

The smells of the cloves and the cinnamon open our senses deeper and wake us up with sweet aromas.

מחיה ממיני בשמים
michaye m'minei b'samim
enlivened from a variety of spices

THE LIGHT OF THE FIRE

The warm glow of the candlelight dances in our eyes as we observe the shadows and light playing on our fingertips.

מחיה מאורי האש
michaye m'oray ha'aish
enlivened from the light of the fire

THE RECOGNITION OF TIME

We pause and breathe in this time. The melodies, the tastes, the scents and the sights will transform us and will allow us to keep that sacred time within our hearts as we look ahead to a new week filled with challenge, change and new beginnings.

מחיה מהבדלה מחול
michaye m'havdalah m'chol
enlivened from the separation from the mundane