

GOTT FUN AVROHOM

In some communities, women recite the following before *Havdalah*. See commentary.

גאט *God of Abraham,* of Isaac, and of Jacob, protect Your people, Israel, from all evil in Your praise – as the beloved, Holy Sabbath takes leave – that the coming week may arrive to bring perfect faith, faith in scholars, love of and attachment to good friends, attachment to the Creator, Blessed is He, to have faith in Your Thirteen Principles, and in the complete and close Redemption, speedily in our days, in the Resuscitation of the Dead and in the prophecy of our teacher, Moses, peace is upon him.*

Master of the universe, since You are the One Who gives strength to the exhausted – give Your beloved Jewish children the strength to praise You, and to serve only You and no other.

May this week arrive for kindness, for good fortune, for blessing, for success, for good health, for wealth and honor, and for children, life, and sustenance, for us and for all Israel. Amen.

light, and evil, represented by darkness. The awareness that God took Israel to Himself as His Chosen Nation should cause inexpressible joy. Finally, the last cause of intense joy is the realization that Sabbath is God's special day of holiness and, as the *Zohar* teaches, He presented it as a gift to Israel (*Yesod v'Shoresh Ha'Avodah*).

גאט פון אברהם – *Gott fun Avrohom*. It was customary in many European communities for the women to recite the following prayer for a successful week, before *Havdalah*. Since women generally did not recite the *Maariv* service, they would follow this prayer with *בין קדש לחול*, *Blessed is He Who separates between*

holy and secular, as a substitute for *חוננתנו*, *You have graciously given us*, which is inserted into the *Shemoneh Esrei* to proclaim the distinction between the sanctity represented by the Sabbath, and the secularity represented by the weekdays. Today, many women maintain the custom of reciting *Gott fun Avrohom* before *Havdalah*. Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev, traditionally recognized as the author of this prayer, however, wrote that it should be recited three times by men, women, and children, and that this recitation would help assure success in the ensuing week. Because it was designed both as a prayer, and as a source of inspiration, it was composed in Yiddish, the prevailing language among Eastern European Jews.

גאט פון אברהם

In some communities, women recite the following before *Havdalah*. See commentary.

גאט פון אברהם* און פון יצחק און פון יעקב, באהיט דיין פאלק ישראל פון אלעם בייזין אין דיינעם לויב, אז דער ליבער שבת קודש גייט אנוועק, אז דיא וואך זאל אונז קומען צו אמונה שלימה, צו אמונת חכמים, צו אהבת ודבוק חברים טובים, צו דביקות הבורא ברוך הוא, מאמין צו זיין בשלשה עשר עיקרים שלה, ובגאולה שלה וקרובה במהרה בימינו, ובתחית המתים, ובנבואת משה רבינו עליו השלום.

רבוננו של עולם דוא ביסט דאך הנותן ליצחק פח, גיב דיינע ליבע אידישע קינדערלעך אויך פח דייך צו לויבין, און דייך צו דינען און ווייטער קיינעם נישט.

און דיא וואך זאל אונז קומען צו חסד, און צו מזל, און צו ברכה, און צו הצלחה, און צו גזונט, און צו עושר וכבוד, און צו בני חיי ומזוני, לנו ולכל ישראל. אמן.

54a) gives the reason for the institution of this blessing. Fire was created at the end of Adam's first Sabbath on earth. Then, God gave Adam the instinctive understanding to rub stones together in order to bring forth a fire for light and heat. *Midrash Rabbah* (11:2) elaborates that God did so in response to Adam's fear when he saw darkness falling. He was terrified lest, having been banished from the Garden of Eden, he would be faced with mortal danger that he could not even see. As in the case of all such blessings, one must enjoy the thing for which he thanks God, in this case, the illumination. Therefore, we hold our fingers up to the flame and gaze at its light upon our nails.

חול – *Secular*. [Although the more familiar

translation is *profane*, we have chosen not to use it. The word *profane* has the general connotation of blasphemy and impurity. The message of Sabbath, however, is not limited to avoidance of the blasphemous and impure; rather it involves the need to recognize that even ordinary, *secular*, pursuits are deficient if they are not imbued with holiness.]

... בין קדש לחול בין אור לחשך – *Between holy and secular, between light and darkness...* The *holy* represents sanctity, while *חול* is the קלפה, *shell*, i.e., the outer barrier that prevents people from perceiving holiness. By recognizing the difference between *light* and *darkness* one is able to discern God's wisdom, and thereby make one's own distinction between good, represented by