The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
Shabbos, Aug 19 2023 ■ ב' אלול תשפ"ג
סימן רצ"ט סעיף י'

Overview

Siman 299 Seif 10:

It is prohibited to perform melacha before havdala and if one recited havdala in davening it is permitted even though one did not recite havdala on a kos. If one must perform melacha before reciting havdala in davening he must say המבדיל (בין הקדש ובין החל without a beracha and then may perform melacha. And women who do not recite havdala in davening should be trained to say המבדיל בין קדש לחל before performing melacha. Some maintain that this is limited to the performance of a full-fledged melacha, e.g. writing and weaving, but kindling a lamp or transporting something from one domain to another does not require this recitation and accordingly the lenient custom developed to kindle a lamp immediately after the congregation recited ברכו but the first position is more authoritative. Some maintain that one should draw water on motzai Shabbos since Miriam's well travels to every well on motzai Shabbos and one who touches it and drinks it will be healed from his illnesses but I haven't seen this custom. See above siman 263 whether one who adds onto Shabbos may instruct someone else who recited havdala to perform melacha on his behalf.

- This applies even to activities that are Rabbinically prohibited. (M.B. 32)
- Levush writes that one should say, ברוך המבדיל בין הקדש ובין החול. (M.B. 34)
- This declaration does not help as far as eating is concerned for which one must first recite havdala on a cup of wine. (M.B. 35)
- When Yom Tov falls on motzai Shabbos and one did not yet daven he must say ברוך המבדיל בין קדש לקדש but may not eat until he first recites kiddush. (M.B. 36)
- The rationale is that since the prohibition against performing melacha before havdala is only Rabbinic, one could be lenient regarding those melachos that do not involve exertion. (M.B. 38)
- Magen Avrohom challenges the validity of this custom and concludes that one should train his daughters to recite ברוך המבדיל בין קדש לחל before performing melacha. (M.B. 39)
- A ba'al nefesh should not perform melacha until after the recitation of kedusha but the gabbai may kindle a light immediately to provide light for the tzibbur. It is permitted to bring wine after dark on the second day of Yom Tov before one davened since it involves preparation rather than an actual melacha and once it is dark it is permitted. Maharil folded his talis after Shabbos so that he would be engaged in a mitzvah immediately. (M.B. 40)

Halacha Highlight

Performing melacha before the recitation of havdala

Shulchan Aruch Siman 299 Seif 10

אסור לעשות שום מלאכה קדם שיבדיל

It is prohibited to perform any melacha before the recitation of havdala

Shulchan Aruch discusses the restriction against performing melacha after Shabbos before one recites havdala. He rules that it is prohibited to perform any melacha, including Rabbinic injunctions (מ"ב ס"ק ל"ב) before the recitation of havdala. Once one recited havdala in davening it is permitted to perform melacha. In the event that one has a need to perform a melacha before the recitation of havdala, one should first declare ברוך המבדיל בין קדש לחול (מ"ב ס"ק ל"ד וס"ק ל"ט) . Two explanations are given for the rationale why it is prohibited to perform melacha even though Shabbos is over. One explanation is that until one recites havdala one retains some of the sanctity of Shabbos. The second explanation is that it is an expression of honor of Shabbos. One demonstrates honor to the King by accompanying Him out before he performs melacha. Any Shabbos prohibition that is either rooted in speech (discussing business matters or other weekday activities), is itself prohibited because it is a weekday activity (עובדין דחול) or was originally prohibited only because it may lead to a melacha (clapping, dancing, blowing shofar) is permitted immediately after Shabbos even if one did not declare ברוך המבדיל וכו' (פסקי תשובות אות י"ג).

Rema cites an opinion that maintains that the only restriction that applies after nightfall before the recitation of havdala is a full-fledged melacha like writing or weaving. In contrast activities such as kindling a light or transporting something from one domain to another are not considered full-fledged melachos and may be performed without the recitation of any sort of havdala. Based on this, the custom developed for women to kindle lights following the recitation of borchu. Rema notes, however, that he agrees with Shulchan Aruch's position and one should not perform any melacha before the recitation of havdala. The Brisker Rov (חידושי הגריי"ז על הרמב"ם פכ"ט מהל' שבת ה"ה) explains that according to this opinion the restriction against melacha is an expression of honor that is due to havdala, i.e. one should not perform melacha before the recitation of havdala. For that reason only full-fledged melachos are prohibited but activities that are not full-fledged melachos are permitted.