

Havdalah & the Hidden Candle

An engaging children's storybook produced by Seed...



Le'ilui Nishmas.
In loving memory of Yaakov Dovid ben Lipa



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Ella and her brother Benny are very excited. Next week they are moving to a new house. Both of them noticed that Mummy and Daddy have been extremely busy sorting pots, pans, toys and all sorts of other things and putting them into boxes. In fact, they are sorting and packing everything to get ready to take to the new house. Moving seems to be a lot of work.



Mummy and Daddy ask Ella and Benny if they can help pack some boxes in their bedrooms. Benny gets very busy sorting through his things and packing boxes. Ella has other ideas; she wants to go up to the loft to see if she can find any old treasures.



Ella remembers that Mummy has told her not to go up to the loft because it can be damp up there, but Ella really does want to look for treasures, so she starts to climb up the wooden ladder. Three steps up, Ella knows what she should really do. Carefully coming backwards down the three steps, she goes straight to Mummy.

“Mummy, if I am really careful and only stay five minutes, please can I go up to the loft and see if there are any treasures we should take to our new home?”

Mummy smiles. “I really don’t think you will find any treasures in our loft. It is quite full of old rubbish, but as you asked so politely you may very carefully go on your five-minute treasure hunt.”



Ella searches through lots of old things that she had never seen before, Finally, she finds something that looks like a real treasure, an unusual candle holder and some sweet-smelling spices.

Her five minutes were up, but she doesn't need to stay any longer. Now she can come down with her new found treasure.



Benny, who always likes to know what Ella has been up to, notices Ella is carefully holding something. Ella is very excited to show him the treasure she has found. Ella and Benny really want to find out more about this interesting treasure, so they quickly call Mummy to show her what Ella has found. Ella is desperate to find out what this special candle holder is and insists that Mummy tells her.



Mummy says that she is very busy packing things right now, but maybe now would be a great time to call Grandpa, he must know exactly what this candle holder is as he gave it to us many years ago.



Ella telephones Grandpa and he is so happy that she called. Ella describes what she has found in the loft, then Benny joins in, “Please tell us what it is Grandpa, it looks like a treasure, it must be something special.”

“Ah, yes, it certainly is,” says Grandpa. He then excitedly shares the mystery of the special candle holder. Grandpa tells Ella that every week after Shabbat goes out there is a special mitzvah to make Havdalah.



This involves a cup of wine, spices, and a special havdalah candle. (That's what goes into the candle holder that Ella found in the loft.) We say a special blessing during Havdalah to make the next week a bit more spiritual. Grandpa says that the candle holder once belonged to his grandpa, and was used every week as the family gathered after Shabbat. Ella thanks Grandpa and then explains to Benny about the special treasure. They feel like there is something very special about Havdalah.



Ella asks Mummy if Grandpa can come over after Shabbat to make Havdalah. So that week after Shabbat, when it was already dark, the whole family stopped what they were doing and sat together to hear Grandpa make Havdalah using the special candle holder and spices that Ella found in the loft.



Ella turns to Mummy and says, “Thank you, that was really special. Now I am going to pack the rest of my boxes but can we please take the Havdalah set with us so we can do it again next week?”



A guide to Havdalah:

Havdalah is the mitzvah we perform after Shabbat has ended. We take a cup of wine or grape juice, we take some spices, we take a Havdalah candle (of intertwined wicks) and the family gathers around as we recite four blessings, which can be found in the Siddur. As we shall see below, the sequence of the blessings is a journey from the most physical up towards the most spiritual.

First, we recite the blessing on the grape juice (we don't drink yet!) – this is the sense of taste which is the most apparent, physical, and easily tapped into sense as the food is entering our bodies.

Next, we recite the blessing on the spices – this matches the sense of smell which is less easily apparent; it is not like taste that enters our body.



Thirdly, we recite the blessing over a flame, which is even less physical, as the sense of smell requires something nearby to smell, whilst sight does not require an immediate physical prompt in the vicinity.

Lastly, we thank Hashem for the ability to distinguish between the weekday and Shabbat (the sanctified and the profane). This capacity does not require any physical prompt at all. We then drink the grape juice.

Thus, the Havdalah journey reminds us of our goal to become gradually and incrementally more spiritual as we exit the Shabbat and enter our week.



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