

# You Can Say That Again

**Q:** Can I make havdalah for my wife if I have already fulfilled the mitzvah myself?

**A:** It is questionable whether women are obligated to recite havdalah, which is why it is generally recommended for women to have a man recite havdalah for them rather than reciting it themselves (which they could do for kiddush if necessary). The problem is that if the man already fulfilled his havdalah obligation, perhaps he cannot recite the *brachos* again for his wife because she may not actually be obligated. However, the halachic bottom line is that women are indeed obligated, so you may recite havdalah for your wife in this case.

There is a concern, however, regarding the *bracha* of *borei me'orei ha'eish* on the *ner*. There is a discussion whether this *bracha* is a *birkas hanehenin* (a *bracha* recited before deriving benefit), like that recited on food, or a *birkas hashevach* (a *bracha* of praise), like that recited on seeing lightning. With regard to *birkas hanehenin*, one person cannot fulfill the obligation of another unless he derives benefit (e.g., by eating something) as well. In contrast, one may recite a *birkas hashevach* on behalf of another even when one does not have the obligation to recite it himself. Thus, if the *bracha* on the *ner* is considered a *birkas hanehenin*, you would not be able to recite it again for your wife, but if it is a *birkas hashevach*, you would. *Lema'aseh*, the prevalent custom is that a man can recite the *bracha* on the *ner* for a woman even after previously fulfilling the obligation himself.

