



## B'NAI DAVID-JUDEA

### Shabbat Shorts

Technically, it's not part of Havdalah. And if you have nothing at hand with which to do it, the Halacha very explicitly does not require you to go out of your way to find something. Yet it is so endearing and distinctive a feature of Havdalah, that it just doesn't feel like Havdalah without it.

It's the bracha over the *b'samim*, the fragrant spice. It's a ritual that's worth a thousand words. Isaiah waxed poetic about the delight of Shabbat, and writers, rabbis and regular folks have all spilled ink in describing Shabbat's unique presence. But the smelling of *b'samim* as Shabbat departs in the hope that the sweet aroma will soften the sadness of Shabbat's departure, speaks more eloquently of our emotional attachment to Shabbat than any volume ever could.

It is noteworthy that we have a ritual of smelling b'samim on Saturday night only. This truly underscores the uniqueness of Shabbat. Even the departure of Yom Tov is not accompanied by b'samim. (The only other b'samim-smelling ritual that I can think of is the custom that is prevalent among some Sephardim to ritually smell b'samim under the *chuppah*. But that's pretty good company for Shabbat.)

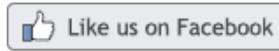
Although the b'samim can consist of almost anything that's sweet-smelling (including perfumes), the Shulchan Aruch cites an interesting custom to use leaves of the *hadas* (myrtle). And not just leaves of any *hadas*, but specifically of the *hadas* that had been used on Sukkot, "for leaves that had been used for a Mitzvah, should be used for another mitzvah" (Mishna Brurah). He of course adds that this should only be done "for as long as it is possible", as there invariably comes a time when the *hadas* leaves from Sukkot are fragrant no more. Rama, reflecting Eastern European practice, speaks of a custom to combine the *hadas* with other spices. Rama seems more concerned than is the Shulchan Aruch (writing in the land of Israel) about the rate at which the *hadasim* will become too dry to emit fragrance, probably a reflection of the condition in which *hadasim* reached Eastern Europe to begin with ☺.

There are a few actual halachot about the b'samim, which we'll look at later in the week!

I love feedback!  
rabbanitalissa@bnaidavid.com

B'nai David-Judea 8906 West Pico Blvd. Los Angeles, CA 90035  
[director@bnaidavid.com](mailto:director@bnaidavid.com)

See what's happening on our social sites



See what's happening on our social sites



B'nai David-Judea, 8906 W. Pico Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90035

[SafeUnsubscribe™ {recipient's email}](#)

[Forward this email](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [About our service provider](#)

Sent by [ravyosef@bnaidavid.com](mailto:ravyosef@bnaidavid.com) in collaboration with



Try it free today