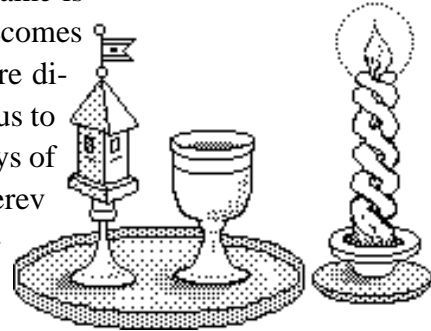


# הַבְּדֵלָה

## *Havdalah*

Havdalah is the concluding service of Shabbat. Its name is taken from the Hebrew word **בדל**, *badal* “to divide,” for it becomes the point at which the Shabbat is official over and therefore divided from the six days of work. Since HaShem instructed us to separate the Shabbat as a day different than the other six days of the week, we carefully mark the beginning of Shabbat at erev Shabbat with the lighting of candles and a joyful meal together and then do the same at the end of Shabbat. Thus, its beginning and end are marked to separate the day.



The symbols used for the Havdalah service all reflect, in one way or another, the joy and glory of Shabbat. First, the Kiddish cup of wine symbolizes the joy of the Shabbat, and corresponds to the same cup used to initiate Shabbat at the erev Shabbat meal. In the Tanach, wine is sometimes a symbol of joy:

He causes the grass to grow for the cattle,  
And vegetation for the labor of man,  
So that he may bring forth food from the earth,  
And wine which makes man's heart glad,  
So that he may make his face glisten with oil,  
And food which sustains man's heart.

Psa. 104:14-15

The second element used in Havdalah are the spices, called **בְּסָמִים**, *besamim*, in Hebrew. The spices are usually in a nice spice box, often shaped like a little house. After blessing HaShem as the Creator of the spices, the spice box is passed to everyone so that the beautiful fragrance of the spices may be enjoyed. This is to remind each one that the Shabbat is like a sweet fragrance that lingers with us. When we consider the Shabbat, it brings sweet memories of being together with our best friends, of learning Torah, and of praising our L-rd together.

The final element in the Havdalah service is the candle, made of more than one wick, and usually woven. The multiple wicks are so the candle will give off a bright light. Cupping our hands toward the candle casts shadows, distinguishing the dark from the light, reminding us that we are to separate the holy from the profane, even as we separate Sabbath from the six days of work. But it also reminds us that we are to take the light of Shabbat into the week that is beginning. Even as Shabbat is a lesson of our rest in HaShem through His Son, Yeshua, so this spirit of rest must shine forth from us as we enter the week of work.

The Havdalah candle is finally extinguished in the remaining wine of the cup. Since we all wish the Sabbath could last longer, it is a kindness to the candle to be extinguished in the symbol of joy (the wine) to diminish the sadness of the passing Sabbath.

Let your light  
shine before men  
in such a way  
that they may see  
your good works,  
and glorify your  
Father who is in  
heaven.

Matt. 5:16