

Borei Shemen Arev -

Blessing upon smelling fragrant oil

Kohelet states, *tov shem mi shemen tov* (a good name is better than fragrant oil), but that does not mean that the fragrance and significance of oil should go unappreciated by us, especially when we consider its use within the sacred history of Israel.



The act of anointing signified consecration to a holy or sacred use, as the act of anointing the *Kohen Gadol* (high priest; Exodus 29:29; Leviticus 4:3) and the sacred vessels of the *mishkan* (Tabernacle; Exodus 30:26) demonstrate. The High Priest and the King are called "the anointed" (Leviticus 4:3,5,16; 6:20; Psalms 132:10), and anointing was considered to be a sort of coronation (1 Samuel 16:13; 2 Samuel 2:4, etc.). Prophets were also said to be anointed (1 Kings 19:16; 1 Chronicles 16:22; Psalms 105:15). Yeshua Himself, as the greatest High Priest, King, and Prophet, is called the "Anointed One" or Messiah (Psalms 2:2; Daniel 9:25,26, John 1:41; Acts 9:22; 17:2,3; 18:5, 28).

Moreover, it was customary to anoint oneself with oil as a means of refreshing or invigorating the body (Deuteronomy 28:40; Ruth 3:3; 2 Samuel 14:2; Psalms 104:15, etc.). As such, anointing another with oil was considered an act of hospitality (Luke 7:38,46). Anointing oil was also used for medicinal purposes (Psalms 109:18; Isaiah 1:6; Mark 6:13; James 5:14), and the bodies of the dead were also sometimes anointed (Mark 14:8; Luke 23:56).

The following blessing may be said when smelling the sacred fragrance of anointing oil:



בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בוֹרֵא שֶׁמֶן עֵרֵב.

*Blessed are Thou, LORD our God, King of the universe,
Creator of fragrant oil.*

Transliterated:

בָּרוּךְ	אַתָּה	יְהוָה	אֱלֹהֵינוּ	מֶלֶךְ	הָעוֹלָם,
ba-rukh	attah	Adonai	elo-heinu	me-lekh	ha-'o-lam
Blessed	are You	LORD	our God	King of	the universe
בוֹרֵא שֶׁמֶן עֵרֵב.					
borei	shemen	'arev			
Creator of	fragrant oil				

*Barukh attah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam,
borei shemen arev.*

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