

My Prayer as Incense

by Rabbi Shefa Gold

תִּכּוֹן תְּפִלַּתִּי קְטֹרֶת לְפָנֶיךָ

Tikon t'filati k'toret l'fanecha

Let my prayer be incense before You. (Psalm 141:2)

Our ancestors knew the secrets of fragrance. They carefully mixed balsam, frankincense, myrrh, spikenard, cinnamon and other precious spices with secret ingredients that would help the smoke ascend. This powerful practice of incense helped to focus our intentions and create an atmosphere of holiness. The complex and beautiful fragrance penetrated our consciousness directly and lifted us up into mystery.

Our prayer can have this same power, lifting us up in beauty, bringing us into an awareness of the Divine Presence.