

# Standing before the Mystery

by Rabbi Shefa Gold

דע לפני מי אתה עומד

Da Lifnay mi atah omayd

(adapted from Talmud, Brachot 28b)

Know before whom you stand!

These words are inscribed on many synagogue walls and are meant to remind the congregants of the seriousness of prayer. In the past I've dismissed this phrase as being too stern, too much like "Big Brother" watching and judging. Yet now, when I chant this phrase, an entirely new meaning emerges. The verb *yada* to "know" also means to "be intimate with" (To know someone in the Biblical sense). As I chant, I am called into intimacy with The Great Mystery who stands before me. That Mystery is disguised as this world, as my life. As I stand before that Mystery I am called into my power, in order to fully engage. The veil between me and the world-as-God drops away, and I can experience the intimate knowing that I am not a separate observer, but rather an integral part of The Mystery of existence.

(this is a two part round)